Edited by:
Stelios Lekakis, Graham Fairclough, Thomas Meier, Sam Turner

TOWARDS AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF DEVASTATION: BREAKING / REPLACING THE PEOPLE-PLACE CONNECTION IN LANDSCAPE

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ix

Prologue 1

Thomas Meier, Graham Fairclough and Sam Turner

1. **Landscape Devastation, Dislocation and Re-settlement:** an Introduction 3

Stelios Lekakis and Graham Fairclough

2. **Understanding the End:** Developing a Theoretical Frame for Devastation 15

Destroyed Landscapes and Places 41

Nikola Vuletic

3. **A Rebuilt Landscape:** The Palatine Countryside after its Devastation during the Nine Years War (1688–1697) 43

Mark Jackson

4. **Devastating Cilician Settlements in Byzantine Times** 61

Niveen Kassem, Vean Al-Saka, Rawaa Qasha and Mark Jackson

5. **The Interplay of Memory and Landscape:** Cultural Landscapes of Iraqi Syriacs and Chaldeans 87

Re-made Landscape 113

Annie Tindley

6. **A ‘Nimrod’s Paradise’ or ‘Man-made Desert’? The Devastation of Scotland’s Uplands:** Drivers, Responses and Resilience, c. 1800 to the Present 115

Katherine Bellamy

7. **Translation and Transformation:** Re-shaping the Altepetl and Landscape in Early Colonial Mexico 141

Persistence 161

Julia Schönicke and Moritz Kinzel

8. **Memorial Fragments – Ruin Interactions, Spatial Concepts and Narratives at the Neolithic Settlement of Göbekli Tepe, Türkiye** 163

Ben Jervis

9. **From Urban Devastation to Creative Destruction:** Disturbance and Urban Life in Later Medieval England 191

Natalia Moragas Segura, Maria Torras Freixa and Alessandra Pecci

10. **The Teotihuacan ‘Collapse’ and the Persistence of Abandonment in the Archaeological Narrative** 211

(Re) Settling Afterwards 231

Julia Van Duijvenvoorde
11. **Travelling Trees:** a Cartographic Study of Palatine Resettlement in 18th Century Irish Plantation Landscapes 233

Pelin Abay and Ufuk Serin
12. **Living Amongst the 'Ruins':** Dislocation, Resettlement and the Lost Identity of Santa in the Highlands of the Eastern Black Sea, Türkiye 261

Daniel Siemens
13. **Invisible Devastation and Successful Re-Settlement in the German *Heimatfilm*:** The Case of Waldwinter/Glocken der Heimat (1956) 287

Heritage Reflections 307

Carsten Paludan-Müller
14. **Interaction of Past and Present in Conflict Seen Through the Prism of Three Great Eurasian Empires** 309

Marie Louise Stig Sørensen
15. **The Role of Heritage Reconstruction in the Rebuilding of Society After Violent Conflict** 333

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Finally, the editorial team gratefully acknowledges the valuable contributions of our colleagues who reviewed the chapters included in this volume: Ofer Ashkenazi, Pinar Aykac, Gilly Carr, Marie Elisabeth Berg Christensen, Çiler Çilingiroğlu, Mina Dragouni, Carl Griffin, Kirstine Haase, Elif Koparal, Linda R. Manzanilla, Richard Oram, Philipp Stiasny, Mariz Tadros, Mariana Favila Vázquez, and Andrew Wells. Special thanks to Maria Duggan who has helpfully contributed to the first stage typesetting of the volume.

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Prologue

1. Landscape Devastation, Dislocation and Re-settlement: an Introduction

Thomas Meier, Graham Fairclough and Sam Turner

In 2018, shortly before Christmas and before the Covid-19 pandemic, the authors found themselves at the Theoretical Archaeology Group conference in Chester (UK) discussing the extent to which archaeological or historical approaches might be useful for understanding the response of past and present societies to violent destruction, in particular destruction that was caused deliberately by other people. As archaeologists we might see the physical results of destruction in our excavations and surveys, especially if destruction was fundamental and/or final, and as historians we read about the impact of destruction in contemporary descriptions. Our readings of material and written sources mostly focus on on-site destruction, on settlements of all kinds, but we are convinced that it is also possible and important to explore such impacts further through the concept of 'landscape'. This is not only because settlements and their inhabitants largely depend on the surrounding space in terms of resources, nutrition, communication, security, and so on. In current thinking 'landscape' is much more than just a functional space of ecosystem services, or indeed an aesthetic or visual relationship with place; rather, 'landscape' also embraces issues of identity and memory, communality and ownership, conflict and justice, physical and emotional well-being, and social as well as ecological balance (e.g. Leibenath et al. 2013; Howard et al. 2018). Such human social and cultural facets are always connected to the material character of places (Ingold 2001, 2011), but we reason that an approach informed by current thinking on landscapes helps us appreciate past social and cultural responses in a deeper way. At the time we started our project[1] the topic seemed almost theoretical, but today, following the appalling suffering caused by wars in Ukraine, Sudan, the Levant and elsewhere, it seems, unfortunately, acutely topical.

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Thomas Meier, Graham Fairclough and Sam Turner: Landscape Devastation, Dislocation and Re-settlement: an Introduction. In: Lekakis, S. et al. (eds.), Towards an Archaeology of Devastation: Breaking/Replacing the People-Place Connection in Landscape. Heidelberg: heiBOOKS 2026, p. 3–13, DOI: https://doi.org/10.11588/heibooks.1613.c24595.

The 'landscape approach' is closely related to the 'spatial turn', which is now well established in the social sciences and humanities (Günzel 2010). Both follow the idea that space and landscape are social constructs amalgamating unevenly distributed but culturally-defined places, their relations and groupings, that are constantly transformed by the societies which inhabit them (e.g. Löw 2000). Thus particular landscapes and places are constituted by specific social actions anchored to historical and geographical contingency. A crucial idea is the concept of sense of place (Tuan 1975; Boyko 2014), which links individual and collective identity to places and thus roots identity in space. While sense of place may be an individual notion, the concept of landscape transcends an individualising perspective because 'landscape' is the result of social interaction and so relates to social groups or to society as a whole.

An intimate connection between landscape and people (including necessarily identity and custom) can be traced by etymologists and historians at least to the early medieval era, certainly in northern Europe, when *lantscaf/lantskepi* first shows up in Old High German, Old Norse and Old English. In these early usages, 'landscape' and cognate words do not primarily refer to a physical space in itself, but a larger area or region where a cohesive community of people was dwelling, sharing common practices and, crucially, customs. They were thus 'shaping' their land, as the suffix originally meant (Müller 1977; Schenk 2001). This can be taken to be what the American-Danish scholar Ken Olwig defined as the substantive meaning of landscape (Olwig 1996 and in many subsequent works, e.g. Olwig 2019). This 'social' meaning of landscape largely vanished from view in the early modern period when the word was appropriated in Europe (and North America) to mean almost exclusively painterly depictions of rural scenes (Groh and Groh 1991; Büttner 2000; Schramm 2008), a 'new', explicitly aesthetic meaning adopted into Dutch and English at the end of the 16th century (Olwig 2002; Cosgrove 2004, 61) that lent itself more easily to emerging nationalistic perspectives (Darby 2000). In recent decades, the older meanings of landscape have risen to the fore again in Europe, perhaps most notably in the Council of Europe's Landscape Convention (CoE 2000). One effect has been to highlight resonances between 'landscape' in a European(ised) context and indigenous attitudes to landscape elsewhere in the world. It is in this framework that the chapters of this book were written.

The people–identity–place connection is only to a small degree established by rational reflection, but mainly emerges from emotions and sensations, traditions and memories – the synaesthetic and holistic human-space encounter that we term 'landscape'. Recent studies have built on this idea of 'sense of place' and introduced similar concepts such as people's sense of landscape (e.g. Knez 2014; Knez & Eliasson 2017) or landscape identity (e.g. Stobbelaar & Pedroli 2011; Ramos et al. 2016). When people connect with each other to create social networks, they most commonly (if not inevitably) do so in the framework of their environs, and through the use of common and shared spaces and resources. Questions of justice and equity thus form part of the landscape approach (Egoz et al. 2011; Dessein et al. 2015). In present discourse sensation and identity are – at least to some degree – connected to materiality and thus sense of place/landscape is implicitly conceptualised as referring to a specific physical point or region in space. Older research, however, indicates that places – and sense of place and identity with them – can be transferred from one physical location to another (e.g. Halbwachs 1941).

The importance of rootedness in an individually charged landscape is highlighted in the (post-)modern and globalised world as a significant ingredient of mental and bodily well-being and positive identity-formation (Gebhard & Kistemann 2016). In the aftermath of apocalyptic 20th- and 21st-century experiences, the damage caused to well-being and identity by devastation of heritage began to receive attention (e.g. Schofield 2009; Stig Sørensen & Viejo-Rose 2015; Auclair and Fairclough 2015). Concern about climate change has turned landscape research towards the impact of major 'natural' (generally humanly-compounded) catastrophe and change caused by wildfires, floods, tsunami, earthquake, or volcanic events (e.g. Borst 1981; Hoffman & Oliver-Smith 2002; Butler et al. 2018); the 2020 Covid pandemic further highlighted the vulnerability of supposedly established and rooted ways of interacting with space and place. There has, however, been more limited research (although see Sampson and Gifford 2010; Sooväli-Sepping et al. 2015) on the effects on landscape mentality and identity of deliberate humanly-caused devastation of landscapes such as war or the forced expulsion of people from their inherited landscapes. We hope that the papers collected in this volume will extend the state of the art in this area and furnish deeper historical context than individual case studies might normally achieve.

In this volume, we use the concept of 'landscape' as an analytical tool to explore how people and societies responded to devastatingly-changed spatial circumstances: how power, control, and agency were used, enforced, granted or taken away through landscape, and how landscape relationships were rebuilt or replaced (van Duijvenvoorde et al. 2023). Within this framework, the collected papers set out through a variety of disciplinary approaches to examine the consequences and aftermath of abrupt moments when the connection between landscape and social identity is broken. They adopt a relatively deep time perspective to establish building blocks for an archaeology of destruction, disruption and re-habitation. In the light of recent conflicts since the 1990s, alongside fundamental landscape destruction and forced displacement on an unprecedented scale (UNHCR 2023) we also hope to illuminate aspects of conscious, explicit and deliberate political implications which are relevant to the world of today.

The focus: landscape and destruction

This book brings together some of the case-studies that were considered during our project in order to explore examples from different geographies and time periods. In current research the general concept of 'landscape change' (and resistance to it) is often framed in terms of environmental degradation. Much research has focussed on the erosion of biodiversity or the loss of ecological services (whether related to food security, water quality, or nature conservation) or in relation to the loss of 'special' places linked to historical events or individuals (e.g. Convery et al. 2014; Rumble et al. 2024). We acknowledge the great extent to which most of these changes are the direct or indirect results of human decisions and activities, even though sometimes (at least originally) unintended and unforeseen. Notwithstanding their undoubted importance, we choose to focus elsewhere – on the devastation of human-place relationships which was planned and deliberate. Our aim is to understand comprehensive or fundamental reconfigurations of the landscape as a whole, not merely changes to iconic sites or monuments, which created a corresponding dislocation of people from place and a need for survivors or incoming new populations to create new and/or recreate old landscapes.

1. To guide analysis and thought on specific case-studies we establish four research foci that conceptualise the formation and destruction of landscapes and identities as mutual processes with intertwined dependency:
2. We ask how the deliberate devastation of landscapes in the past impacted on communities beyond the economic and functional level, especially in terms of their constructions of mental landscapes and sense of place.
3. We consider the extent to which sudden devastation or dislocation led to disempowerment or (by contrast) offered options for the empowerment of social groups and therefore catalysed social change. A key issue is to examine what constituted a sufficiently fundamental devastation to cause rapid social change.
4. We research the factors that affected recovery and response, or what might be termed societal 'resilience'. We want to know if archaeological and historical methods could help us perceive the landscape-related strategies that were followed in the immediate aftermath of destruction, during the response-phase of the disaster-cycle, to rearrange and re-accommodate social structures and shared or individual identities.
5. We examine and compare which kind of societies emerged following destruction, and explore the extent to which aspects like social cohesion or the power to exercise agency were defining factors in the creation of new landscapes. How far did coping with devastation produce similar practices and structures as coping with dislocation?

Furthermore, we distinguish between two broad categories of human actions leading to change which went beyond the ‘loss’ or destruction of individual components of landscapes. The first we term ‘transformation’, which includes changes caused by slower, longer-acting processes (such as mining, globalisation, industrialisation, land privatisation and enclosure), generally caused by deeply rooted and widespread social trends. Landscape transformation tends to be foreseeable to some extent, allowing people – at least theoretically – the possibility of adapting over several years and of influencing ongoing changes.

The book touches on such processes, but its main focus is largely on sudden destruction caused by rapid, locally- or regionally-targeted acts of violence and destruction (sometimes including expropriation, expulsion or genocide) that led to landscape disruption. Such cases have usually been caused by specific and more narrowly-defined external and uncontrollable powers (e.g. military or governmental forces), and inhabitants were usually confronted with a completely new situation almost from one day to the next. Generally speaking, such destruction may follow various intentions:

a) Destruction of political entities. This is what historians usually focus upon, but from the perspective of archaeology this is a kind of meta-perspective as a political entity is first of all an abstract construct. The end of many empires are examples at hand – especially if they were terminated purposefully.

b) Destruction of people, called genocide. While the people are physically and systematically murdered their material culture largely survives and is appropriated by others. The Shoah or early Byzantine Cilicia (Jackson, this volume) are examples at hand.

c) Destruction of material culture. This intends to weaken, divert or even destroy memories and identities as in the case study of the Palatinate (Vuletic, this volume). Usually archaeologists deal with this kind of destruction.

   As a sub-category the destruction of material culture may follow the physical expulsion or extermination of a population only after the passage of time, as in the case of the Armenians, whose material culture was partly destroyed only decades after the physical genocide (Paludan-Müller, this volume).

d) is a combination of b) and c), the simultaneous destruction of people and their material culture to wipe them out in any aspect of their being, including memories; the Rwandan genocide is a case in point (Gilbert 2018; 2019).

Notions of anti-heritage?

In the context of destructions of identity, landscape and heritage it may be worth considering whether the neologism *anti-heritage* offers new analytical options. So far the term is extremely rare and – as a brief internet research proves on 30 April 2025 – no concise meaning has yet been established.

In a very trivial way, 'anti-heritage' could be associated with everything which is averse to heritage and/or is intended or used to destroy it – from denial of significance to the emblematic bulldozer, bomb or government policy. Tim Winter uses (coins?) the term in such a meaning in passing, but does not elaborate on it (Winter 2013, 533); with this notion it is sometimes adopted in the heritage sector (e.g. Halme 2018, 32). More profoundly we may start from the definition in the Council of Europe Faro-Framework-Convention (art. 2 a): '*cultural heritage is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions*'.[2] As anti-heritage claims to be heritage as well, it should adhere to this definition. But what about the "anti"? Is anti-heritage a hostile heritage, identified by one heritage community (a term coined by the Convention) for use not in the peaceful and integrating way the Faro-Convention propagates, but in a divisive, partisan and excluding way against ('anti') other groups (which may also be heritage communities? Think of reconstructed heritage in ex-Yugoslavia or the Near East which prolongs and petrifies civil strife and mutual exclusion (see Kassem et al. and Paludan-Müller in this volume).

A third reading of 'anti' in the context of the Faro-convention could be heritage which is in conflict with other heritage. When restructuring the Stonehenge area – enigmatic World Heritage *par excellence* – the former entrance-building of 1968 was one of the bigger issues. At that time, it was quite close to the site, comprising a subterranean gate, a small souvenir shop and a tunnel. Heritage and tourist stakeholders easily agreed that this building had a hugely negative impact on the integrity and experience of the site and should be completely removed and substituted by a modern, large-scale visitor centre a mile to the east and invisible from Stonehenge itself (Chippendale et al. 2015). The entrance building was seen as anti-heritage, despite itself being a product of past heritage activity and thus a part of Stonehenge's millennia-long biography. In a more dramatic example, Pippa Postgate demonstrates how the attribution of anti-heritage exerts discursive power that can be harmful to marginalised groups' appreciation of their own heritage (in this case an urban landscape, a mainly late 1960s large-scale public housing complex falling victim to 1980s and 1990s neo-liberalisation) (Postgate 2024). In the same way, however, such anti-heritage can be resistive and liberating in relation to dominant heritage discourses (Hoffman 2024).

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[2] https://rm.coe.int/1680083746 [30 April 2025].

Finally, anti-heritage may be considered heritage which is deliberately forgotten or simply hidden, e.g. the remains of the Islamic period in Mallorca, rarely studied, rarely mentioned in tourist discourse. Deliberate forgetting may be seen as an anti-heritage-practice, but 'silencing' (sensu Foucault 1971) may come closer to what is intended. Many parts of the Islamic remains of Mallorca are not entirely forgotten, but they are silent in archaeological, heritage and tourist discourses. Only a few are picked up – especially gardens and water installations like baths – and referred to frequently as touristic sites, although without further context. Both gardens and refined water usage are typical ingredients of the orientalist gaze (Saïd 1978), which can be understood as another practice and dimension of silencing. Similar 'selective heritage' can be seen in museum practice on divided islands (Stylianou-Lambert et al. 2015). Past realities are glossed over by present imaginations to such an extent that past realities become invisible: a form of intangible devastation and dislocation of the types discussed in the chapters of this book.

Closely related is the concept of 'anti-landscapes' (Nye and Elkind 2014), defining them as places that no longer 'sustain life', and are no longer 'liveable space'. For Nye and Elkind's contributors, these are frequently environmentally destroyed or devastated landscapes, but some of them also extend the term to 'de- (or un-) valued' landscapes, further accepting that they are to be seen not purely in terms of material degradation but of more fundamental mental attitudes (Fairclough 2016). This is a range of meanings that can also inform notions of 'anti-heritage'. Just as heritage and landscape ideas are both the foundation of our Devastation project, so both of these antonyms (if they are indeed in opposition to each other) could inform a reading of the chapters that follow.

Landscape devastation: exploring case-studies

This book begins with a chapter by Stelios Lekakis and Graham Fairclough presenting a common foundation which underpins our broader approach on landscape, destruction and recovery. It provides a short overview of our approach and methods, including a critical review of published literature across humanities and social science disciplines concerned with the theory of landscape and destruction. The aim is to identify some key methods and research avenues, particularly those related to spatial approaches in the humanities; but also including phenomenology and psychological studies. Thereafter, each of the following chapters considers different case-studies through diverse chronologies and geographies, with greatest depth of focus on causation, resilience or adaptation. All are based on in-depth research, some of which formed the core studies during our project (in particular those on the Palatinate and the Palatines by Nikola Vuletić and Julia van Duijvenvoorde); while the others are drawn following the project's workshops but based on already ongoing research programmes conducted by many colleagues.

The chapters included in the book cannot give a comprehensive overview, and do not seek to unify or equalise the experience of devastation in the sense of an anthropological constant, but rather they explore the range of human adaptations consequent on such apocalyptic experiences. This underlines a key aim of the research: to create new ways to understand the social impacts of the deliberate devastation and dislocation of landscapes in both the deeper past and more recent times (the focus of many chapters in the book) – and perhaps, unfortunately, with relevance in years to come.

Biographies

Thomas Meier has been trained as an archaeologist and holds a professorship in pre- and early history at Heidelberg University. He has researched and taught in the subject areas of medieval death, burial, and afterlife, on the making and appropriation of heritage and on human-environmental relations in the longue durée. For eight years he has been on the directorate of the Heidelberg Center for the Environment (HCE), serving two and a half years as director. Over the years Thomas has focused more and more on the epistemology and conditions of academic reasoning with special focus on critical inquiry and materialities. He usually works from a perspective of radical constructivism.

Graham Fairclough is an archaeologist with longstanding research interests in landscape and heritage management. Since 2012 he has been co-editor of the journal *Landscapes* (Taylor & Francis) and a researcher associated with Newcastle University's School of History, Classics and Archaeology, and its McCord Centre for Landscapes. Before 2012 he worked for 35 years in English Heritage and its government predecessor, most recently leading its Characterisation team and before that in a variety of heritage management and designation jobs. He has written and published widely on heritage and landscape policy and practice, and participated in several EU-funded international projects. https://www.ncl.ac.uk/hca/people/profile/grahamfairclough.html

Sam Turner is an archaeologist whose research interests focus on the development of landscapes from ancient times onwards, and on medieval archaeology. He has undertaken fieldwork and research on these topics around the world in Britain, China, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Mexico, Oman, Spain, Sudan and elsewhere. He has worked at Newcastle University since 2004, where he is currently a Professor of Archaeology and co-director of the Newcastle University Centre for Landscape.

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2. Understanding the End: Developing a Theoretical Frame for Devastation

Stelios Lekakis and Graham Fairclough

Introduction and scope

This chapter is a discursive theoretical reflection on the concepts of humanly-caused devastation and its consequences, from social and personal dislocation to individual and group 'resettlement'. It offers a framework for the whole book derived from working documents prepared during the joint DFG-AHRC research project, 'Devastation, Dislocation and (Re-) Settlement: Breaking/replacing the people-place connection in landscape'. This was an interdisciplinary research project and network operating from 2022 to 2024, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) (van Duijvenvoorde et al. 2023). The project was centred on two early modern case studies of the Rhineland palatinate in the 1690s and afterwards, which were then extended with 'satellite' research being carried out by colleagues in Germany, Britain and beyond working in a wider range of periods and places, principally from historically and archaeologically informed disciplinary perspectives.

The Devastation project as a whole was guided by the four overarching research questions outlined in this book's introduction. These questions led us to explore the intertwined processes of landscape and identity formation through the lens of their destruction. We examined how the deliberate devastation of landscapes in the past has shaped communities beyond mere economic or functional losses; a key question was whether sudden devastation or forced dislocation leads to disempowerment and/or, conversely, serves as a catalyst for social change. We also examined the factors that influenced recovery and resilience, investigating the landscape-related strategies

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employed in the immediate aftermath of devastation to reconstruct social structures and re-establish shared or individual identities. Finally, we considered the societies that emerge in response to such upheavals, questioning the extent to which social cohesion and agency shape new landscapes. In this context, we asked whether the experience of destruction and displacement generated comparable coping mechanisms and social structures, and whether the obliteration of place is more or less transformative than the forced movement of people.

Most immediately relevant to this chapter is the question of the impacts of devastation events in spheres beyond the economic and functional, especially in terms of the construction, survival and replacement of mental landscapes and sense of place. Answers to that question introduced questions about societal resilience which affects recovery and response to devastation, and how (if at all, and where) social structures and shared or individual identities are reconstructed, in the more-or-less immediate response phase of the disaster cycle. This further involved investigating the extent to which deliberate devastation empowered or disempowered communities either to create structures that recreated the pre-existing social and political order, or to encourage social change; this brought us, and this chapter, to the '(Re)settlement' component of its title, centred on cultural and mental ways of coping with devastation and trauma, both immediately and in the much longer term – therefore in particular shifting the focus onto aftermath, response and resilience.

The topic of devastation, and its consequences, effects and challenges for recovery, is very large, and it is all too evident from world events during the project and still today, that deliberate devastation is far from being only an historical phenomenon. Especially for currently ongoing examples of devastation, academic detachment can become an increasingly elusive virtue. To provide a manageable scope, our project and this chapter adopt three criteria (none of them concerned with period or date) to focus its reflections: **intentionality** (policy), **rapidity** (mainly immediate impacts) and **large-scale** (effects, or impact). Thus, we are focused on deliberate human acts that have intentionally (or carelessly) caused extensive destruction (devastation) in a short space of time but with (often extremely) long-term consequences.

Of these three criteria, intentionality – purpose and aims – allows us to focus particularly on human-caused disasters that were also deliberate, or at least caused by actions heedless (or careless) of consequences. By and large, therefore, naturally caused disasters are excluded from this research, while acknowledging (as with climate change impacts for example) that even with 'natural' disasters and especially with responses to them there are usually underlying if long-term human causes. Our focus on rapidity, and therefore mainly discrete human devastations, draws us towards relatively short-term and even abrupt events and actions, whilst acknowledging that the effects, impacts and responses can be and often were spread over much longer periods of times, often over many generations. By the opposite token, long-term transformations may also contain specific abrupt events. Our third criterion, large-scale, refers not merely to the magnitude of devastation and the strength of its impact, but also to the project's adoption of a landscape lens for analysing devastations, which enables us to take important aspects such as identity, people-place interfaces and connections, and where appropriate nature-culture relationships, into account.

Choosing our Words, Defining our Terms

There is a large lexicon of words that can be applied to devastating events and their impacts and aftermaths, such as catastrophe, apocalypse, oblivion, annihilation and many more. There were some attempts to systematise our language in our project, but nevertheless chapters in this book demonstrate interesting diversity. Our project's original title bequeathed us three main terms, that is Devastation, Dislocation and (Re) Settlement, and in this section the meaning we choose to give to them is outlined.

By **Devastation,** two broad types of impact are signified, which often go hand-in-hand. First, are the sweeping and far-reaching destructive or transformative impacts on the physical world, and on people's material and mental landscapes and their material culture. Second, are cases of the significant disruption of existing social and cultural systems and communities, especially when significant enough to cause dislocation or relocation. Even communities that persist in devastated landscapes may be said to have been dislocated if their landscape has been sufficiently transformed.

By **Dislocation** (as a result of and / or a response to devastation) we mean the movement – enforced, unavoidable or 'voluntary' movement of individuals, communities and societies away from their landscape to new places. In the case of communities that remain in the area of devastation, the dislocation is not spatial but rather the breakage of deep-seated links (mental as well as functional) among people and between people and their landscapes.

(Re)settlement (or Relocation) is taken to encompass the flight or forced removal of communities to new locations. This includes not only the forced migration of people from devastated areas, but also the 'importation' into landscapes, destroyed or otherwise, of new communities (including those forcibly expelled from elsewhere), as well as the return of fled communities to changed landscapes). As our project progressed, it became increasingly clear that Re-settlement, as part of various forms of aftermath and response, and in psychological as well as simple physical terms, is in terms of future research the most important and constructive of the three words that form our project title.

Theoretical and conceptual underpinnings

On a theoretical level the concepts of 'landscape', 'space', and 'memory' are all fundamental to this project. All have long traditions in British and German academia, albeit arguably resulting in different concepts. To approach the theme of Devastation/ Dislocation in the landscape, we resorted to landscape theory as an analytical tool. Landscape was deemed for this project to contain three intersecting nodes:

Communities: people and their lives, encompassing memories and identities, visions and sense of place, mental spatialities, and the framing of new beginnings. **Natural ecologies**, at times natural resources: perceptions, distributions and types. **Material culture**: remains of the past, buildings, artefacts and landscape features, tangible and intangible heritage, subaltern (and emerging) as well as mainstream and 'authorised', discomforting as well as reassuring.

'Devastation' should be examined through all three of those parameters to attempt to categorise or better formulate a working perception, a scenario of the impact of man-made destruction to the landscape. There is of course also the question of how far and in what ways landscape in its perceptual meaning can be 'destroyed', rather than being changed (see e.g. Bellamy or Jackson in this volume), with the consequential questions that surround the practicalities and objectives of reconfiguration (reconstruction, rebuilding, replacement) (see Paludan-Müller or Sørensen in this volume for example)

Addressing such topics is complex, sometimes close to impossible. It is most feasible in twentieth and twenty-first century contexts, when oral history and ethnographic data (for example, Siemens in this volume) can be a guide to the meandering paths of migrating survivors' grief and sorrow (for example, Abay and Serin in this volume). It is less clear how this can be done for earlier (even very early) periods. Even where material remains can be investigated archaeologically (for example, Jervis in this volume), many of the non-material aspects of devastation and landscape will be beyond reach in the absence of written evidence, notwithstanding phenomenological and similar approaches. Even where contemporary documentary written accounts exist, their reliability and veracity, coloured by the agenda of their writers, poses obstacles of interpretation, particularly as the human urge and instinct to rebuild and recover is so strong (e.g. Fachard & Harris, 2021). Was Carthage for example truly completely destroyed in 146 BCE? When contemporary accounts tells us that Edward I planned a 'new town' at Berwick upon Tweed, was that because the existing Scottish town had been completed destroyed by his attacking army in 1296 CE, or was he seeking to establish a powerful economic competitor? Our project's two main case studies, the subject of the project's two doctoral investigations (van Duijvenvoorde, Vuletic in this volume), concern a notorious and supposedly clear-cut example in the 1690s of deliberate landscape destruction towards the end of the European early-modern period in a region with good documentation, but as Vuletic shows, even there the extent of destruction is debatable, and variable. Nevertheless, such relatively well-documented cases can act as a bridge to less-well or not at all historically documented more distant contexts; they can offer a means of transferring understandings into older periods. In contrast, other chapters in this book bring both much older (e.g. Schönicke and Kinzel or Moragas et al. in this volume) and much more recent cases (e.g. Tindley or Kassem et al. in this volume) (sometimes better documented) to the discussion.

Armed with ideas and knowledge from these cases, can we recognise and discuss long-past devastations in cases with less evidence? In the absence of direct documentary evidence, can historical and archaeological data that is related to the self-perception of individuals and social groups be made to speak to those concepts directly, including by use of phenomenological approaches (Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Butler)? Or with recourse to the range of responses in human society to loss, ranging from solastalgia, the 'distress that is produced by environmental change impacting on people while they are directly connected to their home environment' (Albrecht 2015), through the curation of memories in diaspora, to the 'rebuilding imperative' that drove recovery after the 'Great War'? Alternatively, early attempts to address this enquiry might provide some guide to approaching personal and shared perceptions of 'devastation'. One such, which will be explored later in this chapter, and which offers the frame for a prototype phenomenological perspective, is Scheler's (1915) discussion on the phenomenon of the 'tragic', an essay written in the second year of the 'Great War', with that war's unprecedented (and unprecedentedly visible) level of destruction. This complements systematic analysis of the devastation parameters discussed above, offering an alternative approach to the processes and events of devastation.

Clarifying and exemplifying devastation

Classification is often a first step in understanding something as complex, varied in character, and unfortunately as commonplace throughout human history and today as humanly caused deliberate devastation and its consequences. Early in our project we attempted to produce a classification using a number of non-linearly connected parameters (reason, result, speed, scope and response), but its usefulness was questionable, with a risk that a classification might appear to apply relative, even moral, weighting to one devastation over another. 'Clarification' is therefore preferred to classification, and so instead we offer here a very few exemplars to explain the scope of our research, and to indicate the wide range of ways in which humans in the past have sought to destroy other lifeways. It will be obvious to all readers that these exemplars represent a tiny proportion of possible exemplars, but it is hoped that they provide a context for the more detailed case studies contained in the main chapters of the book.

The choice of exemplars here – and throughout the book – is subject to a range of selective biases. Scales of the extent of impact, and of time (of the devastating event itself - sudden and abrupt or slower, all are relative terms) and duration of impact (e.g. immediate, medium term, distant and prolonged) are important factors; sudden (abrupt) events might lead to slow results, but conversely slow change in some circumstances can suddenly tip into rapid catastrophic change. Most of all, it is an outside view. It fails to reflect adequately (or at all) the effects of devastation and dislocation on human beings and communities, to which this chapter turns in the next section ('Mental landscapes of devastation and phenomenology'), discussing devastation through experiential, phenomenological and psychological lenses. Clearly our groups are spread along continua, and the distinction between one or another may not be clear even to present-day researchers or observers, let alone to the people who lived (or died) through them. Examples of each 'category' are offered by way of definition, drawn from many periods of history, and from the disciplines of history, anthropology and archaeology.

Devastation

Of the three categories defined by the overall project, Devastation might appear to be the most clear-cut – as defined above, sweeping and far-reaching destructive or transformative impacts on the physical world, and on people's material and mental landscapes. We consider devastation both for its own impact but also more complicatedly for its role as the root cause of a wide range of further, future dislocations of people's lives and self-identity. The act or event which embodies the devastation has both *direct impact*, and *indirect results*, immediate and delayed consequences, and unintended as well as intended consequences. The long-term and continuing impacts are perhaps the most interesting to historians and sociologists, but the immediate destructions are often the most spectacular and obvious. Many types of impact, often in combination, are signified by the term devastation, from the destruction of social and cultural systems and communities to the physical destruction of landscapes and the built environment and deaths of potentially thousands, even millions, of people.

1a. Rapid, Direct and Deliberate

This is the most straightforward of our divisions. Examples usually exhibit explicitly-stated aims to cause the devastation and destruction of existing mental (and physical) landscape, generally also of the social structures that underpinned those landscapes, and frequently also partial or complete genocide and population changes.

Such devastations involve the designed and deliberate targeting, following an organisational plan, of communities and their landscapes, the objective being to produce an intended impact, result, and consequence as (possibly) its ‘primary aim’. This generally involves the physical destruction of a landscape, but population displacement or extermination might also be a goal while the international law concept of dolus specialis might be applicable. The results are frequently sudden and utter, approaching comprehensive destruction.

The Siege of Melos in 416 BC exemplifies rapid, direct and deliberate devastation as a strategic act of war by Athens. With a clear objective of coercion and dominance, the Athenians launched a meticulously organized assault designed to produce a decisive and intended impact: the complete subjugation of the island. The campaign culminated in the wholesale destruction of Melian society, its male population systematically executed, while women and children were enslaved. This was not collateral damage but a calculated act of annihilation, aimed at eliminating resistance and deterring other potential dissenters. The devastation was both physical and existential, as Melos was not merely conquered but effectively erased as a sovereign entity, its landscape transformed from an independent polis into a cautionary ruin under Athenian control. The deliberate targeting of both land and people aligns with the concept of premeditated act of terror, marking the siege as an act of war designed to instil fear, enforce compliance, and assert imperial authority with swift and utter finality.

The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 represent another extreme case of rapid, direct, and deliberate devastation, executed with a clear strategic objective: to force Japan’s unconditional surrender and bring World War II to a decisive end. The attacks were meticulously planned to maximize their intended impact, resulting in the near-instantaneous obliteration of both cities, the deaths of tens of thousands of civilians, and the long-term displacement and suffering of survivors. The destruction was not merely physical but deeply psychological, as the bombings shattered not only the urban landscapes but also the social and cultural fabric of these communities, fundamentally altering their sense of place and identity. The near-total destruction of the cities created an existential void, forcing survivors to navigate a world irrevocably altered. The psychological and cultural trauma was immense, extending far beyond the locus of the bombings, as entire communities were erased in an instant, leaving behind not just ruins but a deep rupture in collective identity. However, the response to this devastation also demonstrated remarkable resilience. Efforts to rebuild began almost immediately, with Hiroshima and Nagasaki transforming into symbols of both suffering and renewal. Urban reconstruction integrated memorialization with modernity, as new cityscapes emerged alongside sites of remembrance, such as Hiroshima’s Peace Park. The bombings also redefined Japan’s national identity, reinforcing pacifism as a core principle and shaping the country’s post-war trajectory. The devastation, while total in its immediate impact, became a catalyst for new social structures, political ideologies, and a global discourse on nuclear ethics, ensuring that the destruction of these landscapes was neither forgotten nor repeated.

1b. Consequential but relatively immediate

In this category we have placed devastations which were less explicitly deliberate in terms of predetermined results, but which nonetheless have harmful substantial devastating effects, particularly leading to mass population expulsions and flights. In such cases there is generally a proximally causative (or enabling) event or series of events (e.g., WWII in the case of the post war movements of people between Poland/Germany). In such cases the objective is not always necessarily intended devastation, but that can be produced as a by-product, and is often (and shortly after) exploited in the pursuit of a deliberate goal such as the expulsion of an existing population (including ethnic cleansing) or the result of a natural catastrophe.

The Asia Minor Catastrophe of 1922, culminating in the destruction of Smyrna and the forced displacement (and replacement) of Greek and Armenian populations, exemplifies consequential and relatively immediate devastation. While not the direct objective of the Greco-Turkish War, the catastrophic events unfolded as an unintended yet foreseeable by-product of the Greek colonial attempt and of the Turkish nationalist campaign to reclaim Anatolia and expel non-Turkish populations. The burning of Smyrna, widespread massacres, and the mass exodus of civilians were driven by the collapse of the Greek military front and the nationalist push for ethnic homogenization. The devastation was both sudden and substantial, as centuries-old communities were uprooted, religious and cultural landmarks destroyed, and entire populations rendered stateless. This upheaval not only transformed the physical and demographic landscape of western Anatolia but also left deep scars on collective memory, shaping national narratives in both Greece and Turkey. The Asia Minor Catastrophe stands as a stark example of how the pursuit of territorial and political objectives can unleash destruction on a scale far beyond its intended scope, reshaping regions and identities for generations.

The Hutu-Tutsi strife in Rwanda and Burundi, particularly following the 1959 Rwandan Revolution and culminating in the 1994 genocide, represents a case of consequential and relatively immediate devastation. While ethnic tensions had deep historical roots, the pursuit of political dominance and ethnic reconfiguration – initially through decolonization struggles and later through state-led policies – triggered waves of violence, displacement, and mass killings. The overthrow of the Tutsi monarchy in Rwanda in 1959 led to widespread persecution of Tutsis, forcing thousands into exile and setting the stage for decades of instability. In 1994, the assassination of Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana catalysed a systematic genocide, where an estimated

800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were brutally murdered. Though the primary goal of the conflict was political control and ethnic realignment, both immediate and enduring results of devastation were profound. Entire communities were erased, landscapes were scarred by violence, and millions were displaced, creating one of the largest refugee crises in modern African history. This upheaval not only reshaped the demographic and social fabric of Rwanda and Burundi but also left lasting psychological and wider geopolitical consequences, demonstrating how the pursuit of power and territorial consolidation can lead to catastrophic, unintended destruction.

1c. Gradual: longer-term results that ensue from deliberate action or inaction

Devastations can also be stretched over considerably longer periods of time, and in such cases the questions of causation and intention can be much less clear-cut. While deliberate, sometimes the impact may have been consequential on other actions and decisions, often in political, colonial or totalitarian context, or even unintended or opportunistic. Even if foreseen, the consequences might yet be 'welcome' to those causing it, or at least fall into the category of 'carelessness' or 'inaction', with other quasi-'natural' factors being blamed (especially in the case of engineered famines), or of the creation of opportunities for achieving further aims. A fuller, more accurate attribution of 'blame' and responsibility may well be delayed for a considerable time. Results are harmful, either substantial or utter and leading sometimes to dislocation.

The **Irish Potato Famine (1845–1852)** exemplifies gradual devastation, unfolding over years as a consequence of both natural blight and deliberate political choices and inaction. While the immediate cause was a fungal disease that decimated Ireland's staple crop, the true catastrophe emerged from British colonial policies that exacerbated food shortages and failed to provide adequate relief. The export of food from Ireland continued even as millions faced starvation, and relief measures were insufficient, reflecting a callous indifference –or even an implicit acceptance– of the famine's impact on the Irish population. The result was a slow but devastating attrition: over a million people perished from starvation and disease, while another million were forced to emigrate, leading to a profound demographic and cultural transformation. The famine not only reshaped Ireland's landscape through depopulation and abandoned lands but also deepened social and political divides, fuelling nationalist movements and anti-colonial sentiment. Its long-term consequences endured for generations, illustrating how systemic neglect and exploitative policies can lead to widespread suffering, displacement, and the near collapse of a society.

The **COVID-19 crisis in Bergamo, Italy, in 2020** (and to lesser extents in some other countries) represents a case of gradual devastation, where the catastrophic impact of the pandemic was amplified by delayed government action, overwhelmed healthcare systems, and systemic unpreparedness. While the virus itself was a natural phenomenon, the failure to provide adequate medical resources, protect vulnerable populations and implement timely lockdowns, turned the outbreak into a humanitarian disaster. Hospitals collapsed under the strain, essential medical supplies ran out, and elderly care homes became sites of mass casualties. The haunting images of military trucks transporting coffins out of the city underscored the scale of the tragedy. The devastation was not immediate but accrued over weeks and months, as public health neglect, mismanagement, and economic pressures contributed to unnecessary deaths and long-term trauma. Beyond the immediate loss of life, the pandemic left lasting scars on Bergamo's social fabric, deepening mistrust in institutions and reshaping urban life.

1d. Creation of the circumstances: for future (sometimes even planned or anticipated) social devastation/disruption

The most long-term of our categories of devastation, which shades into dislocation. Such changes, in the dominant narratives of the time, were often hidden behind concepts such as improvement or modernisation, and were generally presented as in some way inevitable and unquestionable processes of progress. A recurring objective in such cases is the radical redesign of social and political structures and their associated landscapes. They lead to restructuring of socio-economic landscapes and destruction of lifeways even if the initial acts are not immediately categorised as devastating. Resident populations are often dislocated and results range from minor to substantial or utter.

The **land enclosures in England (15th–16th and 17th–19th centuries)** represent a gradual yet transformative form of devastation, fundamentally altering rural society and laying the groundwork for future social upheaval. Initially framed as agricultural 'improvement,' enclosures consolidated common lands into privately owned estates, displacing peasant communities who had long relied on open fields and other common lands for subsistence farming and grazing. While not immediately catastrophic, this restructuring of the socio-economic landscape eroded traditional lifeways, forcing thousands into wage labour, tenancy, or urban migration. The loss of communal land rights led to increased economic disparity, weakened rural resilience, and fuelled the growth of industrial cities – where displaced populations would later face harsh working and living conditions. This process, though gradual, was deeply harmful, severing ties between communities and their landscapes, and reshaping England's social order in ways that would persist for centuries.

Similarly, the **clearances and reorganization in Scotland and Ireland (18th–19th centuries)** engineered a profound restructuring of rural society, with long-term and often devastating consequences. In Scotland, the Highland Clearances saw traditional clan-based communities dismantled as landowners, seeking economic efficiency, replaced tenant farming with large-scale sheep grazing. Families were forcibly evicted, sometimes violently, leading to widespread displacement, migration to urban centres, and emigration overseas. In Ireland, reorganization took a similarly harmful form, as landlords consolidated estates, evicting smallholders and increasing reliance on precarious tenancy systems, which ultimately contributed to famine vulnerability. Though not always immediately ruinous, these policies systematically dismantled long-standing rural lifeways, breaking generational ties to land and fostering conditions of economic instability, cultural loss, and political unrest that would resonate well into the 20th century.

Dislocation

In terms of our project's three topics, 'devastation' and 'resettlement' can be seen as mainly distinct, separate and different processes, but 'dislocation' is being potentially both devastating and settling, a cause as well as an aftermath. To an extent it exists between the two categories, although with wide overlaps. The two examples described above – enclosure in England and clearance in Scotland and Ireland, both the long-term dismantling of social and economic structures and the removal of populations – involved both devastating actions and dislocating consequences and we focussed there on their devastation aspects. However, dislocation, a recurring theme at the heart of the overall project, can be also examined as a standalone process analysed through our established categories of intentionality, rapidity and effect in communities, natural ecologies and material remains. In this case three broad dislocation scenarios stand out: flight, displacement, and removal.

2a. Flight

The act of flight during a devastating event represents the most immediate and reactive form of dislocation, characterized by the urgent need to escape imminent harm. Whether driven by war, famine, or other disasters, these movements are propelled by a complex interplay of the push of danger and the pull of safety, and are thus fundamentally forced escapes, dictated by collapsing conditions that render previous landscapes uninhabitable. Dislocation happens in real-time, often without preparation or clear direction. Refugees and migrants escape with little more than their immediate needs, leaving behind homes, possessions, and community ties. This kind of dislocation is typically temporary in intent -and unlikely to leave much material or documentary evidence in the long term- but can become permanent depending on the trajectory of the crisis and the possibilities for return.

The **Syrian Civil War** triggered one of the largest refugee crises in modern history, with millions fleeing immediate violence, destruction, and political persecution. As airstrikes, sieges, and chemical attacks devastated cities like Aleppo and Homs, families were forced to make split-second decisions to escape, often leaving behind homes, possessions, and livelihoods. The movement was both desperate and immediate, driven by the imperative of survival. Many sought refuge in neighbouring countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan, while others embarked on perilous journeys to Europe. This form of dislocation for safety, was a forced response to the existential threat of war and resulted in thousands of deaths in the sea or the borders; a process we are still watching on our screens.

2b. Displacement

Forced displacement involves the deliberate removal of populations from their homelands, often through political, military, or economic pressures. Unlike the immediacy of flight, forced expulsion is typically systematic and organized, aiming to permanently clear areas for strategic, ideological, or resource-driven purposes. This form of dislocation frequently leads to complete population removal, though in some cases, partial displacement occurs, leaving behind fragmented communities. The displaced are compelled to rebuild their lives elsewhere, often in unfamiliar or hostile environments, reconstructing both their mental and physical landscapes in new settings.

Replacement of towns: Forcible resettlement and replacement has frequently occurred through history after invasions and changes of government, or even through economic reasons (and in the eighteenth century, simply to improve the view from the windows of the local lord's great house and gardens). Such cases can often be small in spatial or numerical terms but nevertheless devastating to those involved. Historians are familiar with the creation of new towns throughout medieval western Europe, and the narrative is often a neutral even celebratory one to do with economic and social progress. In at least some cases, however, (if not most cases perhaps), the foundation of new planned towns also involved the physical destruction or, impoverishment of older, pre-existing settlements in favour of new places. Even if the existing population was moved to the new place, the trauma must have been considerable, and in some cases the old population was replaced in the new town by new populations. To give a single example, at the end of his military conquest of Wales, in 1295, the English king, Edward I, built his final Welsh castle, with an associated new town, at a place he renamed Beaumaris on the island of Anglesey. To this he attracted new residents from among the merchants of northwest England by gifts of property in the new town. The predecessor of Beaumaris, a thriving port called Llanfaes, said to be then one of the most successful ports in Wales, enjoying trade from Dublin and Liverpool, was depopulated and destroyed, and its inhabitants forcibly moved not to Beaumaris but to the other side of the island, to a new place called Newborough, with few advantages. In his French lands, the same Edward used economic measures (tariffs, taxes on imports) to destroy the trade and economic life of long-established towns (such as Fronsac) in favour of his own newly established towns (in Fronsac's case, Libourne). Such cases are individually minor, it might be thought, but cumulatively over several centuries such events – and there were probably very many - deserve to be seen as devastations.

2c. Subsequent, often successive, removals

Successive removals reflect a protracted and layered process of dislocation, where initial forced migrations are followed by further waves of movement driven by deteriorating social, political, or environmental conditions. While the flight and first displacement are often results of direct political or military enforcement, subsequent migrations tend to stem from secondary pressures – such as economic hardship, environmental degradation, or social fragmentation – that undermine the stability of (re)settled communities. These successive moves create a pattern of temporary settlements, where initial destinations serve as provisional waypoints rather than permanent homes, leading to continuous cycles of uprooting. Over time, displaced populations may find themselves pushed further afield, as seen in the 1960s–1970s forced removal of the Chagossians from the Indian Ocean. This multi-staged dislocation complicates the reconstruction of both mental and physical landscapes, often leading to fragmented identities and shifting community structures.

The relocation of the Poor Palatines in the early eighteenth century illustrates a pattern of successive forced removals, where displaced populations were further uprooted by political and economic expediency. Initially refugees from war-torn regions of the Holy Roman Empire, and later pushed out by famine, thousands of impoverished German Protestants fled to England in 1709, seeking asylum from French Catholic persecution and economic hardship. Overwhelmed by their numbers, the British government resettled some in Ireland, where they were expected to bolster the Protestant population, and others were shipped to colonial America, particularly to New York and Pennsylvania. These successive dislocations fragmented their communities, preventing the full re-establishment of their traditional lifeways. Many struggled in their new environments, facing hostility, economic hardship, and continued instability. Though some managed to integrate over time, others remained transient, forced to adapt to ever-changing landscapes and settlement patterns. Their displacement highlights how forced migration, even when framed as resettlement, can lead to prolonged cycles of instability, shaping both the individual experience of exile and broader colonial demographic strategies.

Resettlement: Response: Rebirth / Re-Start, Recovery

Whilst the Devastation project was concerned with acts of deliberate devastation through history, its core focus came increasingly to be on aftermath, on what happened immediately afterwards, whether through resistance, resilience or recovery, or radical change. In any attempt to classify types/areas/circumstances of 'responses' by the types of movement, related concepts may include: community agency in devastation, Resilience (passive, afterwards) and Resistance (active, during and in aftermath), Recovery rate (high & low), Adaptability and Sustainability. An alternative, or complementary, analytical lens might be through heritage rather than landscape, although this raises different concerns, such as identity discourse, and is more likely to assume a nature/culture divide than landscape thinking, a greater focus on portable material culture, and a greater concern for reconstruction rather than (by a range of means) renewal or replacement of the lost landscape.

We identified in the previous section some of the ways in which populations were removed to new places, and their former territories thereafter 'vacated' ('emptied'). Here, focussed on (re) settlement, we mention examples of ways in which vacated territories were reoccupied and new territories or settled (often in the process displacing other populations). In some circumstances, surviving populations stayed to recover and rebuild, a form of resilience or resistance; in others displaced populations returned; in yet others new populations (or different sectors of an existing population, took over the areas. On the other side of the coin, we are concerned with recovery and rebirth in new locations, including diasporas, the adaptation to migration, assimilation, habituation, re-engineering of 'host' landscapes including diasporas; adaptation to migration, assimilation, and habituation; and the re-engineering of 'host' landscapes..

3a. Returns to (or survival in) the place

The act of returning to a devastated homeland, or surviving within it, reflects a profound connection to place and the enduring pull of memory and identity. These returns can be driven by improved safety, the desire to reunite with family, or a deep-seated attachment to ancestral lands. In cases where expulsion was partial, returning individuals may seek to rejoin fragmented communities, while others may be motivated by a sense of duty to reclaim and rebuild what was lost. Sometimes, returns can involve military or violent actions, potentially leading to further cycles of devastation and dislocation. The process of reclaiming and adapting the landscape involves complex negotiations between past and present – whether restoring the same settlement layout or adapting it to new needs, resulting in either temporal or permanent resettlement.

Following the **Nez Perce War of 1877** between the Nez Perce and their allies ('non-treaty Indians') with the United States Army and the exile of the Nez Perce to Idaho Territory (one of the last episodes of the long-drawn out devastation of the native American population by the USA), some bands – despite immense hardship – gradually made their way back to the Pacific Northwest from 1885. Others were later allowed to return through treaties and negotiations, though often to reduced or fragmented reservations rather than their full traditional territories. The process of return was partial and fraught with obstacles, as original settlement patterns had been disrupted, lands were now occupied by settlers, and traditional ways of life had been undermined. In the case of similar indigenous returns in parts of South America, descendants returning several generations later from the cities brought with them non-traditional attitudes to land, causing tensions with those who had not left.

3b. Appearance of new populations

In many cases, devastated or vacated territories are resettled not by returning populations but by new groups, through processes of implantation, inward migration, or forced settlement. These new settlers – who may themselves be victims of displacement – bring with them distinct mental landscapes, cultural practices, and social structures, which shape how they rebuild or adapt the devastated environment to meet their needs. This resettlement can involve replicating familiar patterns from their places of origin or creating entirely different settlement layouts, often resulting in a permanent transformation of the landscape.

In the aftermath of World War II, **the forced transfer of millions of Germans from former eastern territories** – such as Lower Silesia – led to the resettlement of Polish populations in their place. However, in the postwar period, due to logistical and administrative challenges, many German residents were not expelled immediately but were forced to share homes with incoming Polish settlers. These shared Polish-German households became sites of cultural negotiation, tension, and adaptation, as the devastated landscape was repopulated by new arrivals bringing their own mental and social frameworks. The Poles, often themselves displaced from areas annexed by the Soviet Union, had to navigate unfamiliar landscapes and repurpose homes that still bore the marks of their previous German occupants. Over time, the region was restructured to align with Polish national identity, with German place names replaced and cultural symbols erased. This process, though not immediate, was ultimately permanent, leading to the near-total transformation of the social and physical landscape. The forced coexistence of Polish and German communities in these early years serves as a striking example of how resettlement can initially be partial – marked by uneasy overlaps – before becoming a more complete reconfiguration of space and identity.

3c. Diaspora

Diaspora represents one of the most profound and long-lasting forms of resettlement following devastation, characterized by the scattering of displaced populations across wider geographies over extended periods. Unlike other forms of resettlement, diasporic communities often experience a deep sense of fragmentation, with little expectation of a physical return to their ancestral lands. In these contexts, displaced groups face the challenge of preserving their identity – whether through cultural practices, language, or memory – while also negotiating the need to adapt to new social, political, and environmental landscapes. This adaptation can range from ring-fencing cultural identity in close-knit communities to processes of integration or assimilation into host societies. Diasporic populations often carry with them the mental landscapes of their origins, shaping the new spaces they inhabit while also transforming their own identities over time.

The **Armenian diaspora**, shaped by the genocide of 1915 and subsequent waves of displacement, exemplifies long-term dispersal, adaptation, and the preservation of cultural identity across generations. As survivors of the Ottoman-led genocide fled their homeland, they established communities in the Middle East, Europe, and the Americas, carrying with them memories of their lost villages, churches, and ancestral lands. Over time, Armenians built institutions – churches, schools, cultural centres – that helped sustain a collective identity despite geographic fragmentation. While some groups sought to integrate into their host societies, others maintained a strong sense of separateness, advocating for recognition of their historical trauma and preserving linguistic and religious traditions. The idea of return remained a powerful but largely symbolic aspiration, as the original homeland had been transformed under Turkish rule. Instead, many diasporic communities adapted their new environments to reflect their cultural heritage, reinforcing their identity in exile. The Armenian case highlights how diaspora is not merely about loss and dispersal but also about resilience, reinvention, and the continual negotiation between memory and place across generations.

Mental landscapes of devastation and phenomenology

Phenomenology as a starting point

Our project underlined the need to understand devastation in much more than the material or physical destruction it causes, great though that can be. It is equally, or more, necessary to engage with its affective, and existential realities and damage, all of which are deeply embodied in the mentalities of those who endure it, and often too of their descendants. Here the mental landscapes of devastation are discussed through the lens of phenomenology as an overarching framework that encapsulates both communal and personal responses to catastrophic events and transformative processes.

Phenomenology, at its core, starts from the broad perspective that the world is constituted through phenomena as they are given to, or acknowledged by, human consciousness, always in part and through our senses. This field of appearances shapes our experience of belonging, allowing us to construct a lived sense of place and self (Butler 2022: 3). Importantly, this is not a passive condition but an active process, wherein the world, in its 'givenness,' is continually (re)interpreted and made meaningful through individual and collective acts of understanding (Butler 2022: 21). In this sense, devastation is not merely an event or material reality but a phenomenon that disrupts the foundational structures of perception, disorienting individuals and communities in their relationships with place, time, and memory.

The devastations of the Great War induced in Europe significant reconceptualisations of being-in-the-world. For the German philosopher Max Scheler (1874–1928), the destruction wrought by war and catastrophe is not only a material condition but a profound reordering of the affective landscape, and therefore a rupture that exposes the tragic dimension of human existence (Scheler 1915). Devastation and dislocation do not simply remove people from spaces; they unsettle the very fabric of their being-in-the-world, forcing a renegotiation of meaning, attachment and identity. This aligns with Sigmund Freud's *Reflections upon War and Death* (1918), in which he explores the psychic toll of devastation, arguing that loss and destruction reveal the fragility of our constructions of permanence and security. Freud's observations on war's psychological effects emphasize how devastation extends beyond the battlefield into the very structures of selfhood, memory, and emotional stability.

In this context, devastation is not only an interruption of life but an existential and phenomenological cataclysm, amounting to a transformation in how individuals and societies experience the world and themselves within it. Dislocation, whether forced or chosen, adds another layer to this process, confronting individuals with the task of reassembling fractured mental landscapes within unfamiliar or even hostile environments. Similarly, resettlement, whether as return, adaptation or diaspora, engages the phenomenology of rebuilding, a negotiation between loss, continuity, and reinvention.

By approaching devastation, dislocation, and resettlement phenomenologically, we seek to move beyond static descriptions of destruction and migration, instead interrogating the ways in which these events are lived, sensed, and internalized, shaping the ongoing existential conditions of those who experience them.

Experiencing devastation and the 'tragic'

Scheler specifically comments in *Vom Umsturz der Werte*, during the second year of WWI, that in cases of devastation something of value has been destroyed and thus something about the constitution of the world is exhibited (Scheler 1919), as in cases of deep wounds on the human body. It is through radical epistemic dislocations that the structure of this world can be observed. Scheler encapsulates this in the concept of the 'tragic' and goes on to describe it, distancing himself – as he notes – from the famous Aristotelian approach, where the 'tragic' is a dire set of consequences that unfolds consistent with rules of likelihood and probability. For Scheler, the 'tragic' is part of the reality of this world in the society. It exists dormant and features in all objects. It is a 'a kind of atmosphere' *[geistige Atmosphaere]* or a 'property' *[ein Merkmal]* – given off like a heavy breath, 'an obscure glimmering that surrounds' the objects (Scheler & Stambler 1954: 178).

The tragic appears only through the interplay of the internal values of the objects (Scheler & Stambler 1954: 180). It can be considered as an 'inner/tragic necessity', and consequently a necessity which depends not so much on influences breaking in from the outer world but rather on the eternal nature of things and men (Scheler & Stambler 1954: 185). Something must happen for it to appear, but the 'tragic' is not itself an event (Scheler & Stambler 1954: 178). There must be a period of time in which something is lost or destroyed. A definite direction toward the annihilation of a positive value in a determined hierarchy (Scheler & Stambler 1954: 180). It is more than the individual events in which an uncompromising and inevitable destruction of value (such as the destruction of lives, trees, houses, connections to place, elements upon which we depend for life and joy) takes place. As a matter of fact, in its basic connotations Scheler's tragic always implies a determined effectiveness in doing and in suffering. Rather, as the American feminist philosopher Judith Butler analyses in relation to the 2020 global pandemic, the 'tragic' is a category under which certain kinds of experiences are gathered (Butler 2022: 22–23), where something of this world is revealed (Scheler & Stambler 1954: 186).

A structure of this world

Thus, in tragic cases of devastation a feature of the world's makeup appears before us. This is not a condition 'of our own ego, nor its emotions, nor its experience of compassion and fear' (Scheler & Stambler 1954: 178). The world exhibits itself; but how? Since the events are an occasion of the tragic, something more is laid out: a set of components that constitute 'the very makeup of the world'. These are the same components that make such a thing possible. In these cases of devastation, as we are directly confronted with a definite condition of the world's makeup without deliberation or any sort of 'interpretation', the world is at once its condition and the phenomenon itself (Butler 2022: 23–4).

The kind of devastation implies or maybe indicts the very world in which that destruction proved to be possible. It is as if such a possibility had lain outside the thinkable until a certain historical time, but once it became thinkable, it was directly apprehended as a possibility of the world itself – a different world than the one we knew. This view of the world, the devastated world, cannot be assimilated with our previous view of the world but already exists as a defining and framing horizon of the experience (Butler 2022: 68), extending beyond this world. Devastation is all that is.

By looking at/living in the devastation, the notion of the world indicted or laid bare by the 'tragic', we seek to understand the coordinates of this new world in which we may be asked to live in. What is this new world and how are we to live in it?

Death as part of the reality equation

This question was partly answered by the Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) writing at about the same time as Scheler. In his essay *Reflections upon War and Death* (1918), Freud focuses his psychoanalytic arguments on the psychological unrest pervasive in the disillusioned population due to the prolonged warfare, and the news coming from the military front about the new technologies utilised (Freud 1918).

Freud, up until recently a 'proud Austrian' on the side of the Empire that 'deserved' a second chance and with two of his sons fighting for the Austro-Hungarian Empire, gave a lecture on February 16, 1915 on the emotional impact of the Great War. In this, he returns to his idea of the elemental forces (instincts) comprising the innermost essence of human nature. In warfare, a primordial and devastating state of exception, instinctual satisfaction is renounced in the name of Civilization and human instincts transform into altruistic and social ends. The Empire asking for sacrifice strains this relationship to the highest point imaginable; and it breaks it. Fighters lose their 'first inkling of a moral sense' (Thou shalt not kill) and regress to the primitive. In this state, death, usually hidden from the scope of everyday life, can no longer be ignored. In cases of devastation, death is part of the reality equation.

This is another way in which the phenomenon of the tragic/devastation exhibits the makeup of this world but exceeds its horizon, developing new possibilities.

Paradise Lost

This rupture, or trauma, operates as a fundamental threshold, marking a before and after, an existential break in the fabric of lived experience. Trauma is broadly understood as 'a rupture in the continuity of identity, a deregulation of the emotional world, fear, and loss of control over one's condition' (Tata Arcel 2014: 53). Personal trauma is commonly linked to initial shock and emotional chaos (Almoshmosh 2016), often manifesting through silence, repression, and the refusal to articulate the unspeakable (Liakos 2017: 40). Yet trauma does not remain confined to the personal. It expands, becoming embedded in community narratives, forming a collective memory of what has happened and what has not happened, a sedimentation of experience that is often unwittingly transmitted through behaviours, thought systems, and cultural expressions (Halbwachs 2020).

The rupture therefore becomes more than an individual affliction; it is a social trauma, a key fragment in the mosaic of collective identity, shared fate, and common longing – a memory of 'what used to be and is no more' (Galani & Lekakis 2020:

463–4). It can be co-opted within the wider narratives of the nation-state, solidified in official histories and public performances (Anderson 1991). From this vantage point, trauma is nationalised, institutionalised in education curricula, history books, and commemorative rituals, transforming into an unquestioned feature of collective identity (Glavinas 2015). It is in this process that trauma ceases to be a mere consequence of catastrophe and becomes a cultural trait, shaping political agendas, identity formations, and historical consciousness.

Historicising trauma follows different trajectories. It can be shaped into a didactic process, offering a coherent representation of the national self; a heroic narrative, echoing Campbell's (2008) vision of struggle and transcendence; or an alternative historisation, contesting dominant meanings. Yet beyond these historical constructions, trauma also invokes a phenomenological loss – a severing from a once-intelligible world. It forces us to confront the idea of the lifeworld (Lebenswelt), as articulated by Husserl (et al. 1970: 108–9): the dynamic horizon in which we live and which, in turn, 'lives with us.' Trauma does not simply destroy objects or landscapes; it fractures the very structures of meaning that make life recognizable. It is this confrontation with the tragic, the irreplaceable loss of a once-coherent world, that constitutes devastation not just as an event but as a phenomenological crisis that reshapes the fundamental conditions of being-in-the-world.

The Representation of Devastation

Another way in which trauma is historicized is through artistic representation, which situates devastation within a broader sociopolitical and aesthetic landscape. A defining feature of these works is the presence of the sublime, understood in Burke's terms as a quality that inspires awe, horror, and grandeur or, as Kant elaborates, a confrontation with the terrifyingly vast and overwhelming. Artistic representations often create aesthetic distance, inviting contemplation while simultaneously evoking unease and the uncanny. This is achieved through scale, volume, and abstraction – devices that attract attention but also resist direct engagement, blurring the contours of suffering within an aesthetically composed whole.

Devastation can also be represented however through the raw immediacy of objects, whose material presence serves as an index of loss. Artifacts such as charred remains from a burned forest or the Lampedusa Cross, made from the wreckage of migrant boats, function not as abstract representations but as condensed, tactile narratives – objects that synoptically stand for an entire history of destruction and displacement (Hicks and Mallet 2019).

The Afterworld – Resettlement and Adaptation

Following devastation, new worlds emerge, shaped by the movement of dislocated communities and the development of their new settlements. The landscapes of these post-tragic worlds are always subjective, mediated by memory, experience, and expectation (Bender 2002: 103). Movement does not simply imply relocation; it entails a phenomenological engagement with space, in which individuals are never 'nowhere' but are always 'within' a place, negotiating between a 'here' and a 'there' (Bender 2001: 78).

Thus, landscape is not merely a backdrop to human activity but the physical and existential context of being-in-the-world. This holds particular significance in post-tragedy worlds, where the experience of place is layered with loss, adaptation, and reconfiguration. Phenomenology offers a crucial framework for understanding the ambulatory nature of post-devastation landscapes, emphasizing movement, embodiment, and lived experience as key elements in reconstructing belonging. This perspective does not replace or obscure the socio-political and economic dimensions of dislocation and resettlement but complements them, offering a diversified approach to place-making. It also provides the critical tools to question the categories imposed by bureaucratic and academic discourses, foregrounding more nuanced and politically situated understandings of migration, exile, and displacement (Bender 2001: 78–9, 83).

In moments of tragedy and dislocation, people move towards a sense of place and belonging (or, at times, non-belonging). In this movement, they creatively rework the past within a volatile present, drawing on intimate, relational, and affective patterns to reconstruct their worlds (Bender 2002: 107). Yet, as Clifford (2008) reminds us, the role of travel as a catalyst in these transformations is often overlooked. Dislocated individuals do not simply move from one fixed identity to another; they pass through landscapes of exile and return, of dislocation and relocation, where alienation and expectation are constantly negotiated – sometimes transfigured into reconciliation and adaptation, sometimes left unresolved.

The countering of the unfamiliar, bound by the horizon of rupture, devastation, and dispossession, involves the winding of memories and stories around new places, which, over time, may become familiar landscapes. In this sense, resilience is not simply a response to trauma but an active, creative force – a means of reconfiguring life after loss.

The landscapes of these post-tragic worlds are not static but dynamically shaped by memory, movement, and the phenomenology of resettlement. Resettlement, in this sense, is not simply the occupation of space – it is a reconstitution of meaning, an attempt to restore or reinvent a sense of belonging in an altered or entirely new environment. Phenomenologically, resettlement is an embodied experience, an unfolding process in which individuals and communities engage with a world that is often both familiar and estranged. Merleau-Ponty (Merleau-Ponty 2015) reminds us that our perception of space is not abstract but lived – we do not simply observe a landscape, we inhabit it, moving through it with memories, expectations, and gestures that structure our being-in-the-world. For those who resettle after devastation, this process is haunted by absence, as the act of dwelling in a new place is mediated by the persistent presence of a lost world.

A newly inhabited environment is thus never neutral, but layered with projections, desires, and the remnants of what has been left behind. This echoes Scheler's (1915) notion of the tragic, where individuals are compelled to negotiate between the irrevocable past and the contingencies of the present, navigating between irretrievable loss and the necessity of moving forward. Resettlement in these terms, then, is a tension between rupture and adaptation, where individuals must reconfigure their spatial, social, and symbolic attachments to make a new place liveable.

This process unfolds in multiple, often contradictory, ways. Some displaced groups attempt to replicate the lost world, reconstructing homes, rituals, and social structures that maintain a continuity with the past, while others are forced to adapt to new geographies, new cultural landscapes, and new conditions of existence. Freud's (1918) reflections on war and death emphasize how communities mediate trauma through symbolic substitutions. The creation of memorials, narratives, and practices seek to render loss meaningful. In cases of forced resettlement, however, this process is often fractured, as political and economic constraints impose limits on how loss can be articulated and how new life-worlds can be constructed.

Resettlement is thus not simply a logistical movement but a phenomenological transformation, a negotiation between alienation and belonging, rupture and continuity, memory and adaptation. This transformation is often facilitated by acts of emplacement: naming places, establishing routines, cultivating land, and inscribing meaning onto unfamiliar surroundings. Over time, these acts shape new landscapes of intimacy and attachment, where the traces of the past coexist with the necessities of survival and adaptation.

The phenomenology of resettlement also reveals its limits, however. Not all places become home, and not all ruptures can be reconciled. Some communities remain in states of liminality, existing in landscapes that remain transitory, or unsettled, or haunted by loss. This reminds us that resettlement is not always a resolution; rather, it is a continuation of the disruption, a process of negotiating displacement, where the past is never fully left behind, the present never entirely stable, and the future more than usually unknown.

Living in a devastating present

Throughout the preceding discussion, we have explored various scenarios of devastation, dislocation and resettlement in historical contexts. Devastation, whether deliberate, consequential, or gradual, can reshape landscapes and communities, often through acts of physical destruction or political and social upheaval. These devastations, such as the Siege of Melos and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki illustrate how the intentional or accidental destruction of places leads to the forced displacement of populations, permanent or temporary. These displaced populations either return, rebuild, adapt, or are replaced by new communities. These processes of resettlement and recovery – whether through reclamation, migration, or diaspora – offer insight into the complex relationships people form with land, memory, and identity.

However, it is worth acknowledging the hybrid and versatile nature of these categories, as seen not only in real-world historical events but also in film and literature. Science fiction and disaster genres have long utilized these themes, often blending them with timeless myths and legends to illustrate the moral, political, and existential consequences of catastrophe; works like Richard Matheson's 1954 novel *I Am Legend* and George Romero's 1968 film *Night of the Living Dead* explore apocalyptic scenarios where societal structures collapse, leading to the dislocation of survivors who must adapt or perish. Ursula K. Le Guin's 1974 novel *The Dispossessed* offers a more philosophical examination of societal structures and the ways in which dislocation – both voluntary and forced – shapes the lives and landscapes of those involved. Margaret Atwood's 1985 dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, though not set in a devastated landscape, deals with the aftermath of a social apocalypse and the radical reconfiguration of societal and personal landscapes; her later *MaddAdam* trilogy looks at the aftermath and reconstructions of apocalypse, as, from quite different ideological perspectives, does Lionel Shriver's *The Mandibles.* Similarly, Lars von Trier's 2011 film *Melancholia* portrays the disintegration of both personal and collective worlds in the wake of an impending planetary collision, demonstrating the intersection of existential despair and societal breakdown.

Literature and cinema would be a brilliant and uplifting close of this chapter. But the merest glance at any type of newsfeed points to a more dire need. At the time of writing, and doubtless still at the time of publication and reading, devastations are far from confined to the past. In Gaza, as in countless other conflict zones around the world, rapid, direct and deliberate devastation is unfolding - massive destruction of infrastructure, displacement, and the forced uprooting of entire populations. The international community often overlooks or fails to or is incapable of adequately addressing the suffering of these populations, who are not just victims of war, but also of systemic pressure, geopolitical power struggles, and historical narratives that deny them a living future. This tragedy forces us to reconsider the frameworks through which we understand and engage with the concepts of devastation, dislocation and (re)settlement. Their struggle for survival and dignity is an urgent call to reframe the discourse surrounding forced migration, displacement, and the right to rebuild and return.

Biographies

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Destroyed Landscapes and Places

3. A Rebuilt Landscape: The Palatine Countryside after its Devastation during the Nine Years War (1688–1697)

Nikola Vuletic

Keywords Nine Years War; Palatinate; Heidelberg; Mannheim; devastation; scorched-earth strategy; French campaigns; rural resilience; reconstruction

Abstract This chapter investigates the large-scale devastation of the Palatine countryside during the Nine Years War and its aftermath. Using archival, cartographic and archaeological sources, it reconstructs the mechanics and consequences of the French scorched-earth policy under Louis XIV and the responses of rural communities in southwestern Germany. The study highlights variations in destruction between towns and villages, the survival and rebuilding strategies of local populations, and the economic and environmental impacts on agriculture and settlement patterns. By tracing processes of recovery and resilience, it reframes the Palatinate not merely as a landscape of loss but as one actively re-made by its inhabitants in the face of forced displacement and environmental ruin.

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Introduction

The Nine Years War is a well-known chapter in European history because it involved most great European powers, yet nowhere left an impression as profound and long-lasting as in Germany and its national memory, where the ruin of Heidelberg Castle became a symbol for the hereditary enmity between Germany and France. The fighting stretched from Ireland to Italy, but southwestern Germany is regarded as having suffered the most under the Sun King's expansionist foreign policy. While this assessment is justified since this area was the main focus of the scorched earth strategy employed by France in this war, there are still misconceptions about the amount of damage the French troops managed to cause and the effect it had on the civilian population. Just as contemporary pamphleteers and chroniclers focused on the destruction of the cities since they were not only population centres but also held much symbolic value, later researchers also mostly retained this bias and focused their research on the cities. The devastation of the countryside was meanwhile neglected in academia, particularly in the Palatinate where the infamous destructions of Heidelberg and Mannheim proved themselves so much more attractive to researchers. This chapter seeks not only to take a detailed look at village devastations during the Nine Years War and thereby this research gap at least in part, but also to examine how the population responded to the desolation brought upon them and thus shed some light on the mentality and resilience of the rural population in early modern Europe as well as contributing to research on civilian suffering in early modern warfare.

Background: The Nine Years War and the Devastation Plan

Since the Truce of Regensburg had temporarily put an end to the War of the Reunions (1683–1684) Louis XIV had been intent on forcing a permanent recognition of his previous territorial gains by the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I but all of his diplomatic efforts in this regard came to naught (Lynn 1999: 191), just as his attempts to force the Elector Palatine to recognize the legally dubious inheritance claims of the King's sister-in-law to Palatine territories (Häusser 1845: 767–71). However, neither the Emperor's refusal to recognize the French so-called 'reunions' nor the Elector's refusal to acknowledge any territorial claims supposedly held by his predecessor's sister proved sufficient reasons for the King to resort to military action and thus break the truce. The spark that ignited the Nine Years War finally came in 1688, when Leopold I used his authority as Emperor to thwart the election of William Egon von Fürstenberg, an ally of France, as Archbishop of Cologne. King Louis saw this as a breach of the Peace of Münster (1648) which guaranteed the cathedral chapter of the archbishopric its independence in electing the archbishop. Additionally, the Emperor's public reasoning that Fürstenberg was unfit for this position because of his French connections was seen by the King as a direct insult to his royal dignity and a danger to the reputation of the French crown as well as its future influence within the Empire (Kampmann 2021: 246–50). Fearing that the Emperor would himself declare war on France after securing a victorious peace in his war against the Ottoman Empire, the King decided to act first. On 24 September 1688 he published a manifesto detailing his demands and had his armies cross the French border into the Rhineland only a day later although he had given the Emperor and the German Princes three months to agree to his manifesto. The aim was to quickly occupy large parts of southern Germany while the German armies were occupied with fighting the Ottoman Empire in Hungary and the Balkans and force a favourable peace within a few months. The French armies managed to advance deeply into enemy territory and captured several Imperial fortified cities. It became clear rather soon, however, that neither the Emperor nor the German Princes had any intention to submit meekly to French demands (Lynn 1999: 191–195). The French military meanwhile began levying enormous contributions and thus draining the occupied territories of money and supplies while setting villages on fire as punishment for overdue payments and deliveries (Lynn 2002: 95–96). Furthermore, plans were made to raze the fortifications of any towns and cities not intended to be permanently occupied in order to inflict lasting damage to the future military capabilities of the Holy Roman Empire (Vetter 2002: 84).

While the German resistance already threatened the French plan for a quick war, further developments shattered it entirely. William of Orange landed in England intending to claim the English crown for his wife and thus turn England from a French ally into its enemy. King Louis XIV declared war on the United Provinces on 26 November 1688. At first, the King believed that William would be occupied with a protracted civil war in England for a long time, but William's quick success, the 'Glorious Revolution', destroyed this hope. So, with his previous plan to force an immediate peace in tatters and faced with a war on multiple fronts, French minister of war François Michel Le Tellier de Louvois ordered the retreat of the hopelessly overstretched French armies to defensive positions along the Rhine as soon as Imperial troops should get close. This retreat was to be accompanied by the destruction of everything that could be of use to the advancing enemy (Lynn 2002: 90–93). At the end of the year, a French defensive line had formed along the Rhine with small bridgeheads being maintained by garrisons in Philippsburg and Heidelberg. While the former was made into a formidable fortress, Louvois knew that holding the latter would not be possible for long. For this reason, it had already been chosen for defortification, but a worse fate loomed for the city now. Louvois adopted a scorched earth strategy devised by the French diplomat and career soldier Jules Louis Bolé, marquis de Chamlay (Schaab 1992: 151). This consisted of draining the occupied areas in front of the French defensive line of all strategically valuable resources before destroying the cities, villages, fields, vineyards and all other sources of strategically important goods in the area to rob enemy armies operating there of shelter and sustenance. This was supposed to create a cordon of barren land which would make any enemy military operations – particularly time-and resource-demanding sieges – impossible (Cénat 2005: 105–106).

While this strategy failed to achieve its goal (or more precisely, was not sufficient to protect the entire French defensive line), it succeeded in causing devastation on an enormous scale in many of the targeted areas, particularly in the area around Mannheim and Heidelberg where French garrisons were stationed. Some authors have even likened the scale of the devastation to that caused by the Thirty Years War (Hüttel 2022: 20), although the accuracy of this comparison is debatable. In some cases, it stems from the wrong assumption that every village known to have been a target of this devastation campaign was completely and utterly destroyed, in others it is a severely exaggerated view of the geographical spread of the devastations (Raumer 1982: 182). In many cities the strategy did truly manage to cause utter destruction. Mannheim was razed so thoroughly that a curious visitor only found piles of rubble when he arrived and couldn't even make out the place where the city wall once stood (Herrmann 1995: 94). Speyer and Worms were left fields of burned-out ruins by the French troops, as was Heidelberg, although that city was destroyed four years later by drunken and uncontrollable soldiers after the devastation plan had already been abandoned (Vetter 1995: 46). All in all, the damage done to many targeted cities can indeed be described as worse than that which resulted from the Thirty Years War. That it was the same with the countryside always was more of an assumption than an evidence-based claim. For this reason, this chapter turns the focus away from the cities in order to explore what the French scorched earth campaign meant for the affected countryside, how the devastation plan was carried out and how the inhabitants of the affected villages coped with their fate.

The Mechanics of Devastation

Firstly, it has to be said that there are quite a few villages counted among the 'completely or largely destroyed villages' that actually survived relatively unscathed. Some of these were saved by the intervention of monks, like Seckenheim (Probst 1981: 526–527) or by obtaining guarantees of safety by French commanders, like the whole administrative district of Dilsberg (Musall and Scheuerbrandt 1980: 9), while others were located in less accessible areas that were too dangerous for small French detachments to operate in. That they are counted among the destroyed villages is usually the result of unreliable sources being given too much credibility. But even those villages which were in fact victims to French incendiary detachments were not all reduced to smouldering ruins without exception. As it turns out, the process of destruction was rarely exactly the same in different villages and was influenced by a number of factors. Among these are the character of the commanding officers, the discipline and determination of the soldiers and the presence or absence of the local population. In all cases the intention was clear: to destroy the villages in the countryside they were deployed in. In many cases there was even a prohibition of looting which would have distracted the soldiers from their task. (GLA 77 3701:87–88). While we do not have any eye witness accounts of a village destruction during the Nine Years War, just one of a massacre in Handschuhsheim, which was an extreme case and decidedly untypical, there is an account of the devastation of Graben, a village in the Principality of Baden-Durlach, in the course of a similar devastation campaign during the Franco-Dutch War (1672–1678). Citizen Hanß Jakob Rausch described the proceedings to a local official who relayed them to his prince:

> *'Yesterday night at half past nine, unknown to him and the other subjects of the village Graben why it happened, the French came into the village and two of them in front of his house, one smashing in the windows with the barrel of his musket and hitting his maid on the forehead so that she fell off the bench. The other one smashed the door in and said that Rausch should make off with his wife and children, because he wanted to burn. Then the soldier immediately set the bedstraw on fire with his light, took a bundle of straw and set his neighbours straw and hay filled barn alight, which then was ablaze shortly thereafter just as the rest of the village. The church, the town hall, the house of the Schultheiß and a few others were saved with great effort. What the French got into their hands they took with them, among it 16 of the best horses.' (Kemm 1920: 33)*

The immediately notable aspect about this testimony is the cold efficiency and sheer dispassion of the French soldiers. They did not waste time searching the house for valuables before setting it on fire and the only act of violence mentioned was the blow given to the maid. This ruthless efficiency seems to have also characterised many, albeit not all, early village devastations during the Nine Years War and violence was seemingly only common when inhabitants tried to hinder the soldiers or put out the flames. In that case it could be quite severe. The mayor of Rohrbach near Heidelberg was supposedly beaten and stripped naked for his attempt to contain the damage during the devastation of his village (Schmidt-Herb 2016: 44).

This approach, however, apparently began to change after the first few months. The experience of constantly destroying the homes and property of innocent people seems to have led to a deterioration of troop morale and discipline. A French officer named Jean Dumont documented his experiences during the summer campaign of 1689, when a French army under Maréchal Jacques-Henri de Durfort, duc de Duras, tried to retake Heidelberg. After a failed siege, the army marched south towards Strasbourg and Duras had orders from Versailles to cause as much devastation as possible during his march. Dumont describes how they drove the people out of the cities before setting them on fire and how the dragoons – mounted infantry – who were responsible

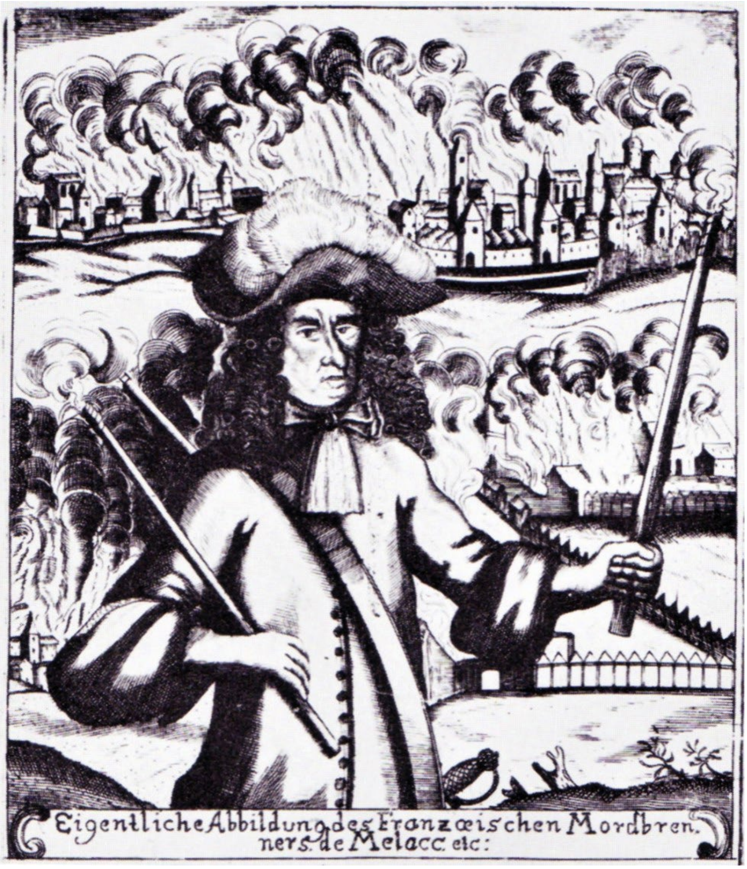

Eigentliche Abbildung des Franzœischen Mordbren-
ners de Melacc etc:

Fig 3.1 Contemporary leaflet (Engraving by unknown artist): 'True picture of the French murderous arsonist de Melac etc.' https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:WP_Melac.jpg

for the destruction of the villages subjected the populace to all kinds of atrocities, from looting to torture and rape. Word of these atrocities seems to have spread quickly, since the French army soon only ever encountered empty villages because the people had already fled into the woods, where according to Dumont they often died of cold and starvation (Dumont 1699: 44–47).

The deterioration of French discipline and morale did not just result in an increase of atrocities towards the civilian population but also in a decrease of effectiveness. (Cénat 2005: 123–124). Looking at the marching route of Duras' army, one finds very few villages that were actually destroyed along the army's path. Many of those that truly lay in ruins had been since the previous winter and were not destroyed during the summer campaign. It seems that Marechal Duras' men were too busy looting the villages instead of burning them (Musall and Scheuerbrandt 1980: 11). But not only bad discipline was to blame here. In a letter to Louvois, Duras himself admitted that there was barely time to properly raze the fortifications of the towns they came across, so he contented himself with simply setting the towns on fire. In Knittlingen, this only led to 40 completely destroyed buildings (Huber 1993: 12), which means that only a small part of the town was destroyed. If Duras really was so pressed for time as he claimed, then it would have been even more difficult for his army to find the necessary time to destroy the villages, which were less strategically important than the bigger towns and cities. Time generally seems to have been a crucial factor when attempting the complete destruction of a village. It was necessary for the soldiers to stand guard over the burning houses until the houses were unsalvageable if they wanted to prevent the inhabitants from putting out the flames or, if that was not an option, come back once or even twice to finish what they had started. There are many villages around Heidelberg known to have certainly been largely destroyed, but only after being set on fire multiple times. A Palatine official in Heidelberg wrote that Edingen and Wieblingen were burned a second time 'because it did not do enough damage the first time' (GLA 77 3701: 89) and Handschuhsheim was 'set alight for the third time in three days' according to the local Catholic parish priest (Raumer 1982: 310). Evidently it was not enough to simply set every house on fire and march away if total destruction was the objective. When Ezéchiel du Mas, comte de Mélac, who was tasked with the devastation of the Palatine countryside around Heidelberg and Mannheim, was confronted by the Baron of Stein-Kallenfels with the fact that 800 houses (more likely buildings) had already fallen victim to his wrath, Mélac retorted that he only lamented the fact it had not been 10,000 and that given enough time he would burn everything in a three French miles (about 12 kilometres) radius, 'down to the last pigpen' (Salzer 1993: 44). While the number of 10,000 buildings is obviously an exaggeration, it is still evident that Mélac was not satisfied with the devastation he had managed to wreak, suggesting a significant number of surviving buildings, even in the area that suffered the most in the whole Palatinate.

The Results of Devastation

The number of surviving buildings in targeted villages is hard to gauge, as well as the question which villages had suffered more than others. Simply examining the villages today and looking for buildings built pre-1689 is not a valid option since they might have been lost due to other reasons. Even in many villages outside the devastation zone there are only a handful of buildings left from the 17th century or earlier. Archaeological excavations meanwhile are rather rare in small Palatine villages, which makes unearthing the evidence of village devastations an equally rare if lucky occurrence. One of these rare excavations took place between 2013 and 2014 in Heddesheim and although it unearthed compelling evidence for the systematic burning of houses in the second half of the 17th century, this does not necessarily tell us anything about Heddesheim's fate during the Nine Years War, because the village had already been thoroughly destroyed in 1674 (Wirth 2017: 106).

But what was the situation like in the truly devastated villages? In Handschuhsheim, where 202 buildings, mostly houses and barns according to the local Catholic parish priest, had been destroyed, the inhabitants sought shelter in their cellars which had survived the blaze for the most part or fled to the nearby woods where they hid in the days immediately following the devastation (Raumer 1982: 310). The high number of destroyed buildings in relation to the number of inhabitants, suggests a mostly destroyed village with a small number of houses, like the reformed parochial house, remaining. It is rather interesting however that the decline in the number of citizens (adult men with an own household) between 1687 and 1692 was only just above 30 percent (Kollnig 1952: 22). If we account for a number of citizens killed during the preceding massacre and the spike in mortality because of malnourishment, sickness and freezing temperatures, it appears that only surprisingly few families chose to emigrate after the devastation of the village. This is in stark contrast to cities like Mannheim and Frankenthal, from which large numbers of people emigrated after the devastation and found new homes in the Principality of Brandenburg to the northeast (Häberle 1909: 33). Meanwhile the relatively small number of villagers who chose to emigrate, mostly to neighbouring principalities, seems to have consisted mostly of educated people like pastors or local officials and only very rarely of peasants (Herzog 1990: 57–62). The reason for this may be found in the comparatively good fertility of Palatine soil (Kollnig 1933: 56) and the fact that emigrating from a village meant forfeiting not only a ruin and a house plot, but also valuable acres of land.

One should not assume however, that this land had not suffered as well. Not only had the French plundered the crops that were still on the fields during the summer campaigns, but they had also ruined other cultivated land and vineyards as part of their devastation plan (Raumer 1982: 184). In addition, the temporary flight of the population in some places meant that there were not enough labourers available to build and maintain the dykes preventing the flooding of the fields. This meant that numerous floods not only made the fields temporarily unworkable, but also blurred field boundaries, so that the borders of individual fields had to be painstakingly reassessed before the field could be brought into shape again (Braun 1930). Also, in cases of significant depopulation (either due to emigration or mortality) there are reports of brushwood overgrowing fields and eventually leaving them unrecognizable as such. In the case of Graben, the population losses caused by the wars of the 17th century led to fields being left unattended for such a long period that eventually a new forest developed, changing the landscape permanently (Kemm 1920: 179).

The Response of the Population

Life in the so-called total-devastation-zone, meaning the area east of the Rhine in the immediate vicinity of Heidelberg and Mannheim was made very difficult by the circumstances. After the immediate shock of the destructions, which as previously mentioned drove many inhabitants into hiding in the surrounding forests, the villagers mostly used their cellars as shelter during the first weeks or found refuge in the homes of family members and friends living in less severely devastated villages in the area. Meanwhile villagers living close to the Rhine saved not only themselves but also everything they were able to take with them by fleeing onto the river islands and building barrack settlements there until the rebuilding of their villages became opportune (Musall 1969: 123). That the village buildings in late 17th century southern Germany were mostly constructed from wood meant that rebuilding was not a daunting prospect (Musall and Scheuerbrandt 1974: 368). A letter from a Palatine government councillor mentions how the French army under Maréchal Duras on its southward march from Heidelberg during the summer campaign destroyed the repaired buildings and newly erected huts in villages which had already been destroyed the previous winter (GLA 77 3701: 171).

There is also the quite peculiar story of the miller of Graben who seems to be one of the best examples for the resilience of southern German villagers during the 17th century. After the mill in Graben had been destroyed by French troops, the miller, who had no other way of feeding himself and his family, quickly rebuilt it in order to continue plying his trade. This however was soon noticed by the Governor of Philippsburg, the town being situated close by. Because the mill had been rebuilt without his permission, the governor ordered the mill to be burned down again together with everything else that was still standing on the spot. Undaunted by this, the miller started to make friends in Philippsburg who after a while managed to use their influence with the governor to obtain a permission for him to rebuild his mill, which he did. Going even further, the Governor now made sure that the miller only had to pay reduced taxes to his lord instead of the regular rate. While the miller did choose to emigrate in the end, he only did so shortly before the end of the war. After working at his twice rebuilt mill for a few years he moved to Heidelsheim (Kemm 1920: 104–106), a larger town, where the conditions were seemingly better, although it had been just as thoroughly destroyed as Graben and also lay in the same principality. Another example showing the tenacity of the inhabitants is the formerly Palatine village of Altlußheim, which had fallen to the Duke of Württemberg in the 16th century and had suffered multiple burnings as well as severe looting during the Nine Years War. In a petition to their sovereign, they describe their situation lamenting not only the loss of most of their houses but also the death of about a third of the population. Nevertheless the vast majority seems to have stayed and implored the Duke to order the Schultheiß (a local government official), who had fled, to return to Altlußheim so that he might direct the rebuilding efforts (Schweinfurth 1996: 24–25).

Meanwhile in less severely devastated villages life seems to have continued relatively normally considering the circumstances. The village of Feudenheim, which lost 77 buildings, most likely about half the village, still held local court sessions and even took in refugees from Mannheim who had nowhere else to go (LkA KA, 045.01., K79: 146–161). The protocol of one of these court sessions sheds some light on why the village still was in relatively good shape. Namely, there was a case about the smith owing money to another citizen because the second had paid the smith's debts to a French trooper, most likely an officer. This Frenchman had spared the house of the smith as well as the local inn, in exchange for two doubloons of protection money (SAM 40/1907_00009). It is unlikely that the smith was the only one who saved his property by paying protection money to corrupt French officers. This, in combination with the fact that the French only had the opportunity to set Feudenheim ablaze once instead of several times, is the most likely explanation for the limited damage. The second factor likely saved a number of other villages north of the Neckar near Mannheim. While the first devastation campaign had its operational centre in Heidelberg and Mélac could send his detachments out multiple times, the devastation campaign in the northern Neckar area which he directed from Mannheim after leaving Heidelberg was much shorter. After sending his detachments out once, German troops started to show themselves on the other side of the Neckar, which made that area far too dangerous for small parties of French soldiers (Reutter 1988: 118–20). While most of the villages situated there were in fact set on fire, the damage seems to have been rather moderate.

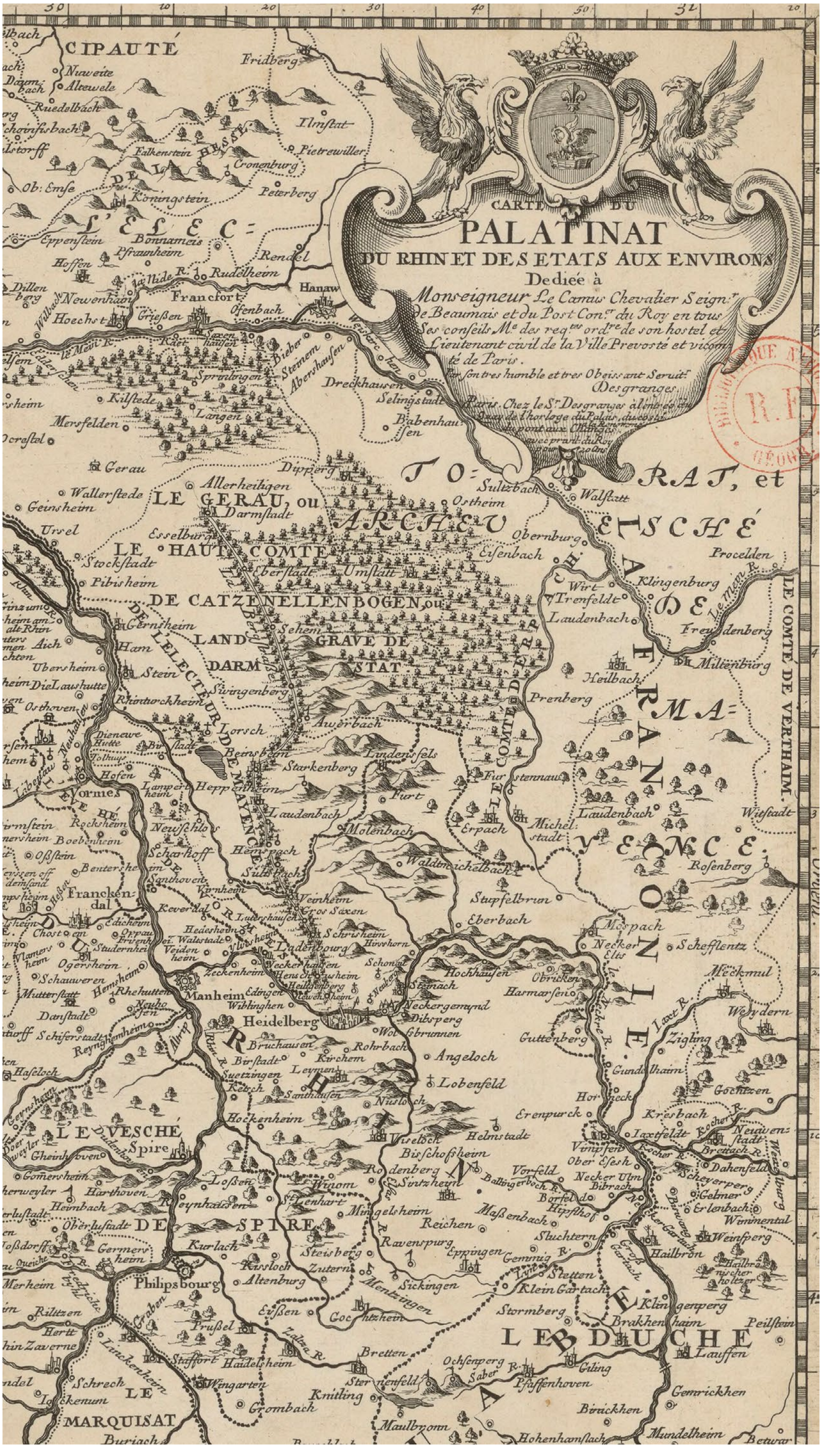
For example, if Konrad Dussel is correct, Heddesheim only went from 204 to 178 inhabitants between 1687 and 1692 (Dussel 2017: 94) and in Ilvesheim more children went to the local school in 1693, four years after the devastation and still during the war, than before the outbreak of the war, without any of them coming from other villages (GLA 63 16: 550–551). While this of course does not mean that the village was entirely spared, the higher number of schoolchildren would be highly unlikely in a village that was almost completely destroyed. The villagers also seem to have found ways of making the best out of their situation. In Feudenheim for example, the local pastor's tithe included a part of the harvest from certain fields. In the absence of enough workers to farm all fields, the villagers preferably farmed those fields not connected to the tithe, thus being able to keep more for themselves (GLA 63 16: 490).

Interestingly, the response of the inhabitants to the devastation was tied much more to where they originally came from than to the scale of destruction. As mentioned, the population of Handschuhsheim mostly seems to have chosen to return to their mostly destroyed village. On the other hand, the populations of Friedrichsfeld and Friesenheim almost completely left for the east. In the case of Friedrichsfeld this happened even before the devastation took place and the French troops simply burned down an abandoned village (Probst 2007, 599). The reason for this was the fact that the population of Friedrichsfeld was comprised almost entirely of Huguenots, French protestants who had left France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, under which they had been allowed to practice their faith. Terrified by the thought of what the army of the Catholic French king, who saw them as disloyal subjects, would do to them, they fled before the army even arrived. Most of them never returned (Schaab 1970: 129–132). In the case of Friesenheim, which was inhabited mostly by protestant Walloons, Dutch and Huguenots there were similar fears with the same result of almost total emigration. These people did not have any ancestral ties to the land they now inhabited and realized they were not safe from the French crown in the Palatinate either, so they moved on (Ruf 1995: 156–162). This means that it is hard to gauge the level of devastation in individual villages by simply looking at the population loss. This is meanwhile possible for the Duchy of Württemberg for example, where there is a clear correlation (Fritz 1994, 451). In the Palatinate, the first to leave were those with the fewest ties to the country and their number varied from village to village, since the Palatinate had been repopulated mostly by foreigners after suffering a staggering level of depopulation in the Thirty Years War (Kollnig 1952: 19). That said, in the case of villages mostly inhabited by long-established Palatines, population losses were still connected to the level of devastation, as the example of Käfertal shows. Käfertal's destruction was described by a local official as so thorough 'that not a single stable was left standing' and the numbers seem to suggest just that. Being home to about 25 families before the war, four years later that number had dropped to 8 (GLA 66 7761: 1443–1445). Since it was a comparatively small village, the French detachment which was sent there seems to have had little difficulty burning it down in a single attempt.

It should not be assumed however, that areas which were not part of the main devastation zones and only had very few villages set to the torch were otherwise left untouched. The French military still extorted enormous amounts of money and supplies from occupied areas and the looting of villages by roaming bands of soldiers was a common occurrence. To add insult to injury, the Palatine lands were not even safe from their own supposed allies and German soldiers sometimes behaved just as viciously as their French counterparts, prompting complaints from numerous villages, one of which declared that it would rather endure the French torch than the constant foraging of the German troops (Huber 1993: 17). Because of this, even undestroyed villages were often hit financially, and the life of the inhabitants was made difficult by the additional property damage that came with the pillaging. In the above-mentioned survey, many pastors and schoolteachers reported that the windows and doors of their houses had been destroyed and their ovens ruined (GLA 63 16: 155, 474, 524). While the destruction of windows is easily explained by the fact that window frames were often made from lead, the reason why the soldiers damaged ovens is not entirely clear. Since cast iron plates that made up so called ‘plate ovens’ are known to have been produced in the Palatinate since the early 16th century (Paul 2005: 153), it is possible that the soldiers plundered these for military use. Other houses in the affected villages most likely suffered the same fate as the abovementioned houses of pastors and schoolteachers. This was the case in Dossenheim for example, a village near Heidelberg that was not destroyed although it was situated in the main devastation zone. The reformed schoolteacher reported that the schoolhouse still stood but now had neither doors nor windows ‘because the French ruined it’ (GLA 63 16: 524). This explains why plundered but otherwise spared villages like Dossenheim still suffered population losses. It is likely that particularly servants, the ‘lower classes’ of the villages without their own land and houses, were quick to leave under such circumstances because it was easier for them to pursue their luck elsewhere than to wait for the situation in the Palatinate to change for the better, which took years to happen. However, since most population censuses at the time only recorded citizens or families, the number of emigrated servants remains unknown because they were not citizens and counted as part of the family.

As was already indicated, population losses should not be equated with emigrations. Even if the mortality rate caused by direct violence was very low because massacres were the exception, the mortality rate still rose rapidly in the wake of the devastations (Fritz 1994: 454–457). The first wave of deaths happened at the most inopportune time, during a harsh winter, which led to a significant increase of the mortality rate among those who had lost their home and were not taken in by family members, friends or sympathetic homeowners. They usually spent the first days or even weeks after the destruction of their home either in the woods and fields, in their cellars or in hastily erected barracks on small river islands, where cold and low food supplies led to disease and starvation.

Of course, the Elector Count Palatine John William was acutely aware that his subjects were strongly tempted to emigrate after enduring the devastation campaigns of 1689 and suffering looting and occasional devastation as well as other brutalities until the end of the war. The border to France was close and the aggressive foreign policy of King Louis XIV notorious, so that even the signing of the Peace of Rijswijk in 1697 was no assurance that hostilities had ceased for good. (This fear was proven justified when the War of the Spanish Succession broke out only four years later.) So, after the end of the war Elector John William bestowed generous tax exemptions and privileges to villages that had been hit particularly hard by the French devastation strategy and also gave special privileges to immigrants who were willing to settle in the devastated parts of his principality (Winkler 1969: 71–72). The rebuilding of the villages, be it mostly by immigrants or by the original population, usually followed the old village plan (Musall and Scheuerbrandt 1974: 368). Houses were re-erected on the same house plots which the destroyed houses had occupied, and cellars were simply reused. Because timber-frame construction remained the preferred method of building village houses and stone buildings like churches were usually left standing because of the great effort it took to properly destroy them, rebuilt villages looked very similar before and after the devastation, even if the population had been completely replaced by newcomers. This is in stark contrast to some cities, particularly Heidelberg. There John William tried to turn a terrible situation into an opportunity by making plans to rebuild Heidelberg in the then-modern Baroque way with straight streets and neat rows of plastered side-gabled houses which looked radically different than the front-gabled timber frame that had dominated Heidelberg's cityscape before its destruction. While John William did not succeed in turning Heidelberg's city plan into a baroque grid structure as he had intended because the citizens were adamant about reusing the old cellars and foundations, he managed to straighten the streets at least a bit and after the first few years most of his citizens also adhered to the new type of building architecture, changing Heidelberg's cityscape forever (Flum 2009: 94–137).


CARTE DU
PALATINAT
DU RHIN ET DES ETATS AUX ENVIRONS
Dediée à
Monseigneur Le Camus Chevalier Seign.r
De Beaumais et du Post Con.r du Roy en tous
Ses conseils M.e des req.tes ord.re de son hostel et
Lieutenant civil de la Ville Prevosté et vicomté de Paris.
Par son tres humble et tres Obeissant Serviteur
Desgranges.
Paris Chez le S.r Desgranges
BIBLIOTHÈQUE N
R.F.
CIPAUTÉ
DE LA HESSE
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LANDGRAVE DE DARMSTAT
LE COMTE DERPACH
FRANCONIE
LE COMTE DE VERTHAIM
DE L'ELECTEUR
PALATIN
L'EVESCHÉ DE SPIRE
LE MARQUISAT
LE DUCHE
Francfort
Hanaw
Darmstadt
Heidelberg
Manheim
Worms
Francken-dal
Spire
Philipsbourg
Le Mein R.
Le Rhin

Fig 3.2
Contemporary map by cartographer Desgranges (first name and dates of birth and death not known): 'Carte du Palatinat du Rhin et des états aux environs / par son très humble et très obeissant servit. Desgranges'
https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530404145/f1.item.zoom#

Altlußheim = Loßsen
Dossenheim not shown, but located between Schriesheim and Handschuhsheim
Feudenheim = Veidenheim
Friedrichsfeld not shown, but located to the south of Seckenheim
Friesenheim = Frisenhei.
Handschuhsheim = Henschusheim
Heddesheim = Hedesheim
Ilvesheim = Ylvesheim
Käfertal = Keverdal
Knittlingen = Knitling
Schriesheim = Schrisheim
Seckenheim = Zeckenheim
Wieblingen = Wiblinghen

Conclusion

In the end, what did the devastations of the Nine Years War mean for the Palatine countryside and its population? They can certainly be described as one of the worst twists of fate to ever befall the region. Thousands of people lost not only their homes but had their basis of subsistence severely ravaged. Many of their orchards and vineyards were purposefully destroyed while their fields were not only plundered and trampled but also swamped by floods and overgrown with vegetation, sometimes for so long that former farmland permanently changed into woodland. Those who did not suffer so badly were still mostly hit financially, losing their savings and food stocks to foragers and looters from both sides of the conflict. However, the damage to the countryside can hardly compare to that done by the Thirty Years War in terms of population losses and long-term effects. This earlier and longer war had depopulated the Palatinate so severely that it had lost about 80 to 90 percent of its inhabitants in certain parts and some villages lay desolate and abandoned for years before the repopulation measures of Elector Count Palatine Charles Louis showed effect and immigrants repopulated the country (Dussel 2017: 83). The Nine Years War meanwhile may have been worse for many cities of the Palatinate, because the armies of the Thirty Years War usually did not raze whole cities to the ground.

The villages were quickly rebuilt according to the old outlines and thus did not change significantly, except for the fact that the population losses meant that some of the house plots remained empty for several years. In many cases they were even still inhabited by the majority of their old population who, undaunted by the shock of the devastations and the following hardships, rebuilt their homes and stayed together as a community. This shows remarkable resilience on the part of the population, for the majority of whom a sudden disaster, even one as grave as witnessing the utter destruction of one's own village, did not seem like a sufficient cause for emigration. The population losses in villages which were not destroyed and the bitter complaints from villages decrying the foraging of German troops as even more unbearable than French arson indicate that the destruction of buildings was not even the main driving force behind the emigrations that did take place. Depriving the population of their means of subsistence, either by appropriating or destroying them, seems to have left the villagers more desperate than forcing them into having to rebuild their houses and barns. This, however, should not be taken to mean that the destruction of houses did not matter. The villages that suffered both from the loss of their supplies as well as their homes, understandably showed the highest population losses. The connection of subsistence loss and emigration would show itself again in palatine history some years later. It would be the terribly harsh winter of 1708/09, accompanied by the harvest failures and land scarcity of the early 18th century that would kickstart the mass emigrations from the southwestern German countryside into the lands of the British Crown.

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4. Devastating Cilician Settlements in Byzantine Times

Mark Jackson

Keywords Kilise Tepe; Göksu Valley; Isauria; Early Byzantine; 7th century; abandonment; frontier society; household assemblages

Abstract This chapter uses the rural settlement of Kilise Tepe (Göksu Valley, Isauria) as a case study to examine how communities experienced and enacted abandonment in the early Byzantine 7th century. Combining stratigraphic data, targeted radiocarbon dates, and room-by-room artefact assemblages, it reconstructs final-use contexts in houses, from curated clear-outs to smashed storage pithoi left in situ. Set against textual narratives of Persian incursions, Arab raids, and shifting Byzantine frontier strategies, the site's de facto floor deposits illuminate household practices, provisioning, and the moment of dislocation. The argument foregrounds agency—abandonment as a constrained but deliberate choice—while tracing the emotional and ontological rupture that followed the loss of place-specific routines and landscapes.

Mark Jackson: Devastating Cilician Settlements in Byzantine Times. In: Lekakis, S. et al. (eds.), Towards an Archaeology of Devastation: Breaking/Replacing the People-Place Connection in Landscape. Heidelberg: heiBOOKS 2026, p. 61–85, DOI: https://doi.org/10.11588/heibooks.1613.c24600.

Introduction

This chapter uses the archaeological evidence from the early Byzantine rural settlement at Kilise Tepe as a case study for considering the impact of abandoning home; its aim is to inform a deeper understanding of devastating events on people in the past by examining what they left behind. A key objective is to contribute to this volume by showing how the interpretation of excavated evidence can help us to gain deeper insight into impact on the lives of people in the past. Destruction of elements of the landscape and threats to people living near Kilise Tepe also exist in the present. By using Kilise Tepe as a case study I seek to extend debates dealing with the 7th century CE beyond current discussions about societal change to consider impact of events at a more personal level in both the past and the present. Through examination of artefacts excavated from houses at Kilise Tepe, this paper seeks to prompt us to consider the trauma experienced by people who have left places where their families have dwelt for generations. I argue that we can use the rich record of artefacts excavated from these houses not simply as a proxy for considering the kinds of activities that took place in these spaces, but also for evaluating something of the impact that would have been felt by those faced with forced evacuation. At Kilise Tepe, I seek to show that physical abandonment may have been a deliberate or empowered decision and that in this case contextual analysis can be used to infer that it was made out of necessity. I argue also that separation from home would have been compounded by the loss of emotional connections and intangible elements sustained by embodied links to places built up over generations.

Kilise Tepe

The Göksu Valley in southern Türkiye is one of the main passes through the central Taurus Mountains linking the Mediterranean Sea and the Central Anatolian Plateau. Emerging from steep slopes lined with terraces, the River Göksu (Kalykadnos) flows through Silifke, ancient Seleukeia the metropolis of the province of Isauria, on its way via its delta to the coast (Figure 4.1). Further north, the valley opens up into a wide basin affording some of the best agricultural land in the region. Archaeological evidence from sites in this basin shows that this well-watered environment has been settled for millennia. Excavation at the mound at Kilise Tepe, for example, has demonstrated occupation dating to the Early Bronze Age – some 4,000 years (Postgate and Thomas 2007: xix). Other mounds including Maltepe and Çingentepe within sight of Kilise Tepe exhibit a similar depth of stratigraphy and surface surveys of artefacts confirm long periods of occupation; they testify to an intensively settled landscape (Mellaart 1954; French 1965). The longevity of these mounds proves sustained occupation of desirable locations over millennia. Destructive events and periods of abandonment are therefore atypical and worthy of particular scrutiny.

Kilise Tepe has a unique location. From the early Bronze Age to the 13th century CE, people living on the mound would have had a 360-degree view of the landscape around their settlement. By the medieval period the site itself rose 13m, sitting on a terrace that towers 30m above the ancient road that still runs as a trackway around the edge of the floodplain (Figure 4.2). Just as Kilise Tepe stands out across the valley, from Kilise Tepe the view towards the ancient mound at Çingentepe in the middle distance is framed by the mountain peaks and passes beyond. While the character and significance of some elements of the surrounding landscape have changed dramatically over time, the relationship between many topographical and anthropogenic features will have remained significant - sometimes over millennia; the natural spring at the north end of the site at Kilise Tepe is a good example that played a part in the lives of people throughout its occupation.

Archaeological evidence in the form of structures, artefacts and ecofacts helps us to understand what it was like to live at this settlement and in this landscape. Excavations at Kilise Tepe provide a detailed record of the exploitation of this unique environment over time. Such elements identified in the stratigraphy may be taken as evidence of similar activities over long periods of continuity. Individuals and families would have shared many and varied experiences from living in the lower Mut basin: the growing, harvesting and consumption of particular kinds of crops, animal husbandry, hunting and fishing; they would also have benefited from the spring and the settlement's

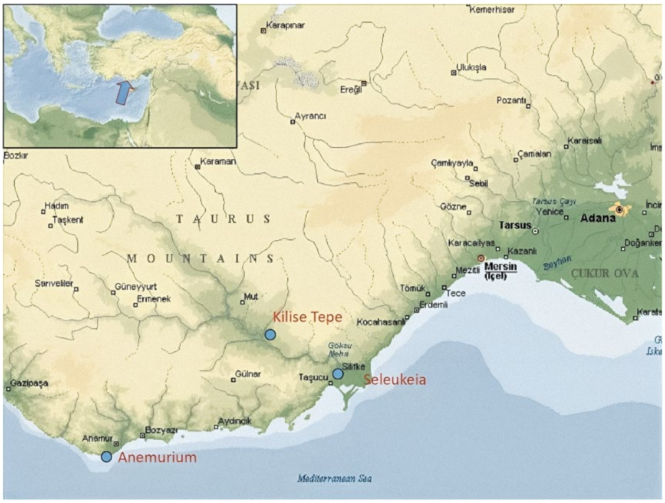

Kemerhisar
Karapınar
ASI
Ulukışla
Ereğli
Pozantı
Ayrancı
Karaisalı
Çamalan
Bozkır
Karaman
Çamlıyayla
Sebil
Hadım
Taşkent
TAURUS
Gözne
Tarsus Çayı
Yenice
Adana
Tarsus
Karacailyas
Kazanlı
Doğanker
MOUNTAINS
Mezitli
Mersin (İçel)
Seyhan
ÇUKUR OVA
Sarıveliler
Güneyyurt
Ermenek
Mut
Tömük
Tece
Erdemli
Kilise Tepe
Kocahasanlı
Göksu Nehri
Silifke
Gülnar
Taşucu
Seleukeia
Gazipaşa
Aydıncık
Bozyazı
Anamur
Anemurium
Mediterranean Sea

Fig 4.1 Map location of Kilise Tepe in the Byzantine period

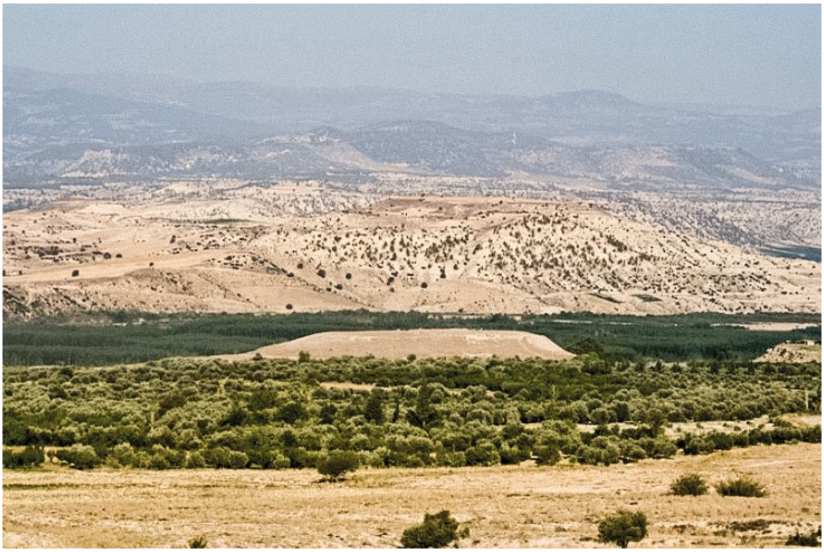


Fig 4.2 Kilise Tepe mound from the east with flood plain of the River Göksu behind (Photo: Bob Miller, KT07_S-1016)

location at the junction of the Göksu river and its tributary the Kurtsuyu; and from roads and passes. Seasonal variation in climate as well as access to the Mediterranean, the Taurus mountains and the Anatolian plateau would afford a range of activities. It is not unusual for people in this part of the world to practice transhumance (Cribb 1991), therefore periods away from the mound in summer might be expected for some members of the community but the wholesale abandonment of the mound is not typical.

Close scrutiny of the evidence for destruction and abandonment at points in the stratigraphic record can be used to infer whether such movement away was voluntary, borne out of necessity, or may have been violent. Any shift away from this place to set up home elsewhere, whether voluntary or not, would not be taken lightly and would have involved considerable impact. The fact that for such long periods of time settlement was sustainable and sustained at Kilise Tepe would suggest that over time intangible elements would be passed on through generations. Archaeological evidence for the abandonment of the site at particular periods can be used as proxy for the separation of people from all the activities in this landscape with which they are familiar. In periods when occupation was disrupted, migration would have had significant impact beyond the physical. Disruption would include the rupturing of the sense of place experienced by those who dwell there as well as elements of the landscape with which people are intimately related.

As we contemplate reasons why people might leave one location in favour of another, the idea of abrupt abandonment of long-lived settlements forces us to confront

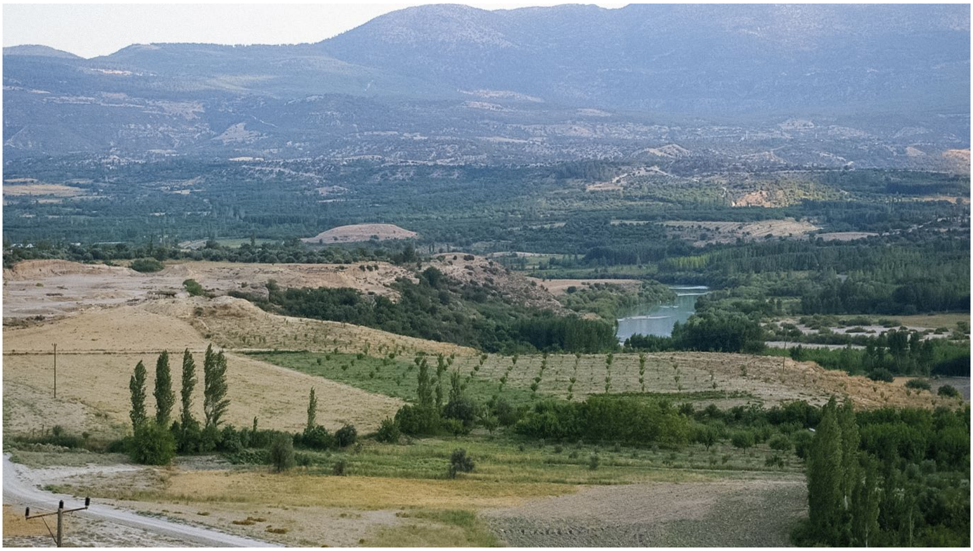


Fig 4.3 View south from Kilise Tepe towards Çingentepe with ancient road, quarry, new plantations and River Göksu in the foreground (Photo: Bob Miller)

the possibility and impact of forced migration. Exposure to armed conflict is associated with negative mental health (Mesa-Vierira et al. 2022). 'Involuntary dislocation' may lead to trauma including PTSD through for example a loss of identity or absence of tools to cope in a new place (Papadopoulos 2021). Even in cases without such exposure, setting up home in a new place would necessitate very different daily activities and experiences such that the connection between people and their homes would have been impossible to recreate elsewhere.

The latest occupation recognised on the mound at Kilise Tepe comes in the form of wooden pegs left behind by transhumant people who have made camp on the mound, following the practice of pastoralists who have moved seasonally with their flocks and tents through this region for centuries (Cribb 1991). The increasing restructuring of the landscape since the 20th century and especially the control of movement and land presents a different kind of devastation and forced relinquishment of ancient common ground for the transhumant people (Korkmaz, interviewed in Briffa and Şerifoğlu 2019).

Modern development is leading to the complete devastation of some elements of the wider Taurus region through quarrying for example, or simply the development of ancient landscapes (Turner et al. 2023). The gradual transformation of the Göksu landscape has resulted in substantial changes visible across the landscape around Kilise Tepe (Figure 4.3). A quarry for the extraction of aggregates located on the north side of the village of Kişla, a kilometre south of Kilise Tepe, has supplied gravel for the new dual carriageway to the coast. The new road is a massive engineering project that has swept away the former single carriageway road running down the valley. Most significantly, almost total destruction is planned for much of the valley floor by proposed flooding following the construction of a dam. Orchards of fruit trees – visible signs of new development and local empowerment – have been planted in the valley and provide important income. Indeed, the apricot is the symbol of the local town at Mut. These plantations have arisen over decades in the shadow of the looming inundation of their well-watered low-lying ground. Members of the community not only seek income from harvests in the short-term, but hold out hope for compensation. The flooding of the valley for a dam at Kayraktepe has been planned for nearly fifty years; as well as the land, each tree has a price, and as years go by, the continued uncertainty of the locals for their future persists. Compensation might go some way to paying off the debts of rural people, the anticipation of recompense does little to allay their abiding fears of homelessness and the trauma of losing a long-term connection to the valley in which their people have dwelt for generations. Abandonment of such places today is often an empowered decision made by younger generations hoping for a different life in urban society, but the loss of long-held practices that have sustained communities for generations comes with its own devastation as rural landscapes are reshaped by pressures and opportunities in the 21st century.

The people who live in the Göksu Valley are very much aware of the ancient features of the landscape. Often these places continue to take an active role – conscious or subconscious – for example, as springs for water, trees for shade or food, or perhaps as landmarks. For eleven seasons between 1994 and 2012 the mound at Kilise Tepe was also a source of employment for people from Kişla who worked as part of the excavation team usually for two months annually as part of an international project to reveal the long history of the site. Historical sources might be used to suggest several potentially devastating events that impacted the region of Isauria in the space of a few generations during the 7th century CE. These sources provide a context for the abandonment of the settlement at Kilise Tepe dated to this time. Most notorious are the successive incursions of first Persian and then Arab armies who moved through the Taurus passes into central Anatolia. Such historical agents of change are often sought as drivers to explain archaeological evidence in the period. While texts provide possible explanations, there is a long tradition of fitting material and environmental evidence uncritically to pre-existing historical narratives which is particularly problematic (Izdebski et al. 2016; Jackson 2017; Moreland 2001; Baillie 1991).

Isauria was however impacted in various ways by wars with Persia from 565 CE - 591 CE and from 603 CE to 629 CE. Opportunities for Isaurians to find paid work in the army were one known benefit of this prolonged period of warfare. But in the 7th century the region seems to have suffered directly by enemy activity. Numismatic sources have been used to provide indirect evidence for the impact of the invasion of Persian armies into Isauria in 618 CE (Foss 1975). The 'evidence' both positive and negative comes from Seleukeia, the provincial capital located at the mouth of the Kalykadnos pass and another Byzantine fortress located high in the Taurus at Isaura (Zengibar Kalesi). Since the minting of coins is generally understood to be for the payment of the army, the striking of coins at Seleukeia in 616 CE and 617 CE – but not in 618 CE when coins were minted that year at Isaura – was used by Foss to argue for the ceding of the province of Isauria by the Byzantine army. He used this to argue that the Byzantine military withdrew their forces from the Mediterranean coastal strip to the safety of the fortified settlement at Isaura high on the north side of the Taurus (1975). The implication of Foss' argument is that the Göksu Valley and settlements such as Kilise Tepe found themselves no longer part of the Roman Empire, but now in a no-man's land, or perhaps even in enemy territory.

Following the destruction of the Persian army, the reconquest of the eastern Roman provinces from Persia was followed by a short-lived peace interrupted within a decade by the growing Islamic Empire which resulted in the conquest of Roman Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia and Egypt between 634–646 CE. A new frontier zone was created by the mid-7th century following roughly the Taurus Mountain range. From this period, regular raids and expeditions into Asia Minor would have impacted Isauria. Arab textual accounts list Arab incursions mounted through the Taurus passes (Brooks 1898; 1900; 1901). Sources would suggest that the Göksu Valley region, although technically within Byzantine territory and protected by the Byzantine fortress at Seleukeia would have been subject to enemy raiding. If the Göksu valley was invaded by any force throughout this long period, it is fair to imagine that the sites on the valley floor such as Kilise Tepe would have been dangerously exposed.

Moralee has argued that Byzantine military manuals consistently show that Byzantine villages were appreciated by experienced commanders as essential for the supply of armies and thus the defence of villages, their relocation and the destruction of enemy villages was a necessary part of conflict (Moralee 2018: 3–4). 'When empires sense that they are crumbling in their borderlands, however borderlands are defined, peasants usually pay the bitterest price with their lives, livestock, and futures' (Moralee 2018: 4–5).

Whether necessary for supplying the army or threatened by the enemy, the textual sources strongly indicate that during and after the first half of the 7th century the people living in this densely occupied landscape at settlements such as Kilise Tepe would have found themselves adapting to new realities resulting from living in a frontier society. Byzantine military treatises written some years later describe new defensive strategies that emerged, but there is good evidence for presence of Arab raiding (Haldon and Kennedy 1980; Haldon 2016: 63ff.).

Textual sources and material culture both help us to gain insight into the agency of people and aspects of their worldview. 'Understanding how the "symbolic universe" of the culture…determines and informs social action and how such action reacts back upon that ideational space is one important aspect of this, and in thinking about historical change it is important not to push it to the side if we are to avoid a mechanistic view of medieval society and properly take into consideration the conjunctural, emotional and "lived" experience of the individuals and groups who populate the historical landscape' (Haldon 2016: 13).

A lack of archaeological evidence with good chronological resolution has previously inhibited detailed archaeological understanding of settlement and lived experience of people in the frontier regions of the Byzantine empire. In his study of church architecture, Stephen Hill, for example, found evidence that many early Byzantine churches fell into disrepair and were later replaced by smaller buildings (Hill 1996: 10). But no direct causal link could be found for explaining or dating these architectural changes. The introduction to Hill's study of churches noted, 'There may, therefore, be reason to suppose that there was some continuity of settlement in Cilicia even after the region had, in effect, become a no man's land between Islam and Christianity. If there was continuity, it was sadly on a reduced scale, and I would certainly agree with Russell that the majority of the population simply took to the hills'. (Hill 1996: 10; Russell 1980: 40).

Better evidence comes from the excavations of the coastal town at Anemurium where James Russell and his team argued for the deterioration of the churches from the end of the 6th century and the abandonment of the settlement by the end of the 7th century CE or perhaps sometime in the 8th century (Russell 2021; Jackson 2022a), with the latest evidence for occupation coming apparently from the Byzantine well deposit (Williams 1977).

One of the problems with understanding the archaeological evidence from landscape surveys for the period after the early 7th century in Anatolia is the difference in the chronological resolution available from the archaeological and textual datasets. Pottery in the period, dated traditionally by analysis of coins from stratified assemblages, is poorly understood in part because of the lack of identification of levels from the 7th century onwards. The relatively poor understanding of pottery from the mid-7th century onwards is compounded by both changes in the manner of issuing coins and the length of time they circulated after their minting. Indeed, the extent to which coins were even relevant for many people living in rural areas such as the Göksu Valley at the time is debatable.

Surveys of southern Anatolia have suffered from a lack of knowledge about the chronology of key ceramic types from the time which may have accentuated the impression of societal change in the period. Pamela Armstrong has suggested, for example, that there has been a misunderstanding of certain key pottery forms which has created an artificial gap. 'It would appear that exaggerated importance given to the defeat of the Byzantine navy by the Arabs in 655 CE, so well-documented in the historical sources, taken together with the universally-accepted cut-off date of 700 CE for some of the more recognisable ceramics in circulation, have together created a hiatus in historical events which did not actually exist' (Armstrong 2006: 26). The potential for the over representation of pottery in narratives of the period up to the 7th century and the apparent hiatus from that period onwards has been the subject of much debate over the last 20 years especially (Pettegrew 2007; Vionis 2020; Jackson 2020; 2022b). Interpretations of data from field surveys often struggle to overcome the problem that coarsewares are difficult to date without stratified material from local excavations (Vroom 2018: 134). Identification of ceramics from the period after the mid-7th century has been particularly problematic, but the visibility of this period has been transformed in recent years (Vroom 2017; Vionis 2020).

In response to these well-known problems, John Haldon has compiled interdisciplinary teams working with texts, archaeology, and environmental data to seek to bring together a more nuanced understanding of the period. Their interdisciplinary work has sought to reconcile multiple sources of data including pollen evidence to investigate landscape change through time.

Pollen and isotope data have been used to infer changes in climate (inferred from Oxygen isotopes) as well as vegetation and land-use data inferred from pollen but the lack of chronological precision in both archaeological and climate data hinder understanding of relationship between climate change and human activity (Izdebski et al. 2016). Familiar agents for change such as plague and enemy attack may be invoked to explain patterns in datasets, but the data are shaped by the ability to identify types of material (Cassis et al. 2018: 393). Changes in the material culture emerge from lived experience and reveal significant shifts in the relationship between people and objects in the second half of the first millennium CE. The reasons for the changes are likely to vary significantly depending on context (Cassis et al. 2018).

Detailed archaeological evidence and case studies for the extent of population change and landscape devastation in the region during the 7th century remain somewhat elusive. Whether there was some form of forced movement of population on a large scale is unknown. Nevertheless, the problems for writing narratives about the experience of local people remain challenging. Archaeological perspectives are necessary if we are to appreciate the realities of the impact of changing political and military circumstances indicated from texts. The wholesale abandonment of settlements occupied for centuries and the movement of people to new locations would not have been decisions made lightly.

Against this backdrop it is informative to look at the detailed evidence from Kilise Tepe as an excavated site in the frontier region of Isauria in order to consider the nature of more detailed evidence within its context and investigate what it might tell us about the extent and nature of possible devastation in the period.

Kilise Tepe excavations

Kilise Tepe represents the first archaeological case study for the period in the Göksu Valley and therefore an opportunity to address some of these long-standing questions. Indeed, Kilise Tepe is the first early Byzantine rural settlement in south-central Anatolia to have been deliberately excavated, a situation created largely because the permit was given for its rescue in advance of a planned dam 1994–1998 (and then for research 2007–2012). In spite of its modern name, Kilise Tepe 'Church Hill' had not drawn the attention of Byzantine archaeologists. It had no surviving standing architecture, there is no indication of its ancient name and perhaps understandably, the few Byzantine archaeologists had focussed limited resources on the many standing buildings of the region. As Co-Director for the Byzantine for the Kilise Tepe Archaeological Project the current author joined J.N. Postgate to conduct the Cambridge-Newcastle Kilise Tepe Archaeological Project. Kilise Tepe offered the opportunity to fill a lacuna left by the focus of Byzantine excavations on cities, fortresses, churches and elite houses, to address the lack of knowledge of more humble houses and people at lower echelons of society largely neglected by scholars of both archaeology and text. For example, a prominent Byzantine historian wrote that, 'After some thought I decided that there was no point (and no way, for lack of sources) in looking into the huts of the destitute, which were virtually empty. Poor peasants no doubt constituted a large percentage – in certain periods, the majority – of the Byzantine emperor's subjects, but their dwellings lack interest because they certainly contained very little' (Oikonomedes 1990: 44). This lack of sources may be true for the texts considered by Oikonomedes, but archaeological excavation at Kilise Tepe demonstrates that peasant houses are of considerable interest and whether they contained artefacts or were apparently empty could be of great significance for interpretations.

The houses of the people at Kilise Tepe were in fact mostly rich in features and finds. Indeed a significant number of artefacts were found abandoned on the floors of the rooms during excavations. These are exactly the kinds of 'everyday' object that Oikonomedes noted would not be discovered in wills. They might typically have been ignored also by excavators of large urban sites with very large archaeological teams faced by many competing priorities and enormous quantities of data. Lying *in situ* on the floors at Kilise Tepe and excavated and given close attention by a relatively small, dedicated team, these artefacts provide important insights into a rural community at what seems to have been a moment of abandonment.

Excavation at Kilise Tepe revealed a network of stone foundation walls of buildings topped by mud brick (Figure 4.4). They recall the traditional fabric of houses built in local villages well into the 20th century with similar stone foundations, mudbrick walls and flat roofs. Across the site their excavation revealed patterns in artefact assemblages that help us to see something of a snapshot of life in the final early Byzantine phase.

The evidence from Kilise Tepe would also seem to suggest that there was wholesale abandonment of one of the most ideal locations in the region in the 7th century CE - without resettlement until the 11–12th Century. Exactly how far people were dislocated is unclear. If we come only from the perspective of the Imperial past, we might find the level of chronological resolution offered by the archaeology frustrating but when we look at the detail of the data new stories emerge. When we consider the long history of settlement at Kilise Tepe, it seems reasonable to assume that any movement from such a unique environment must have been deliberate and must have resulted in a considerable loss of a sense of place and other elements of intangible culture.

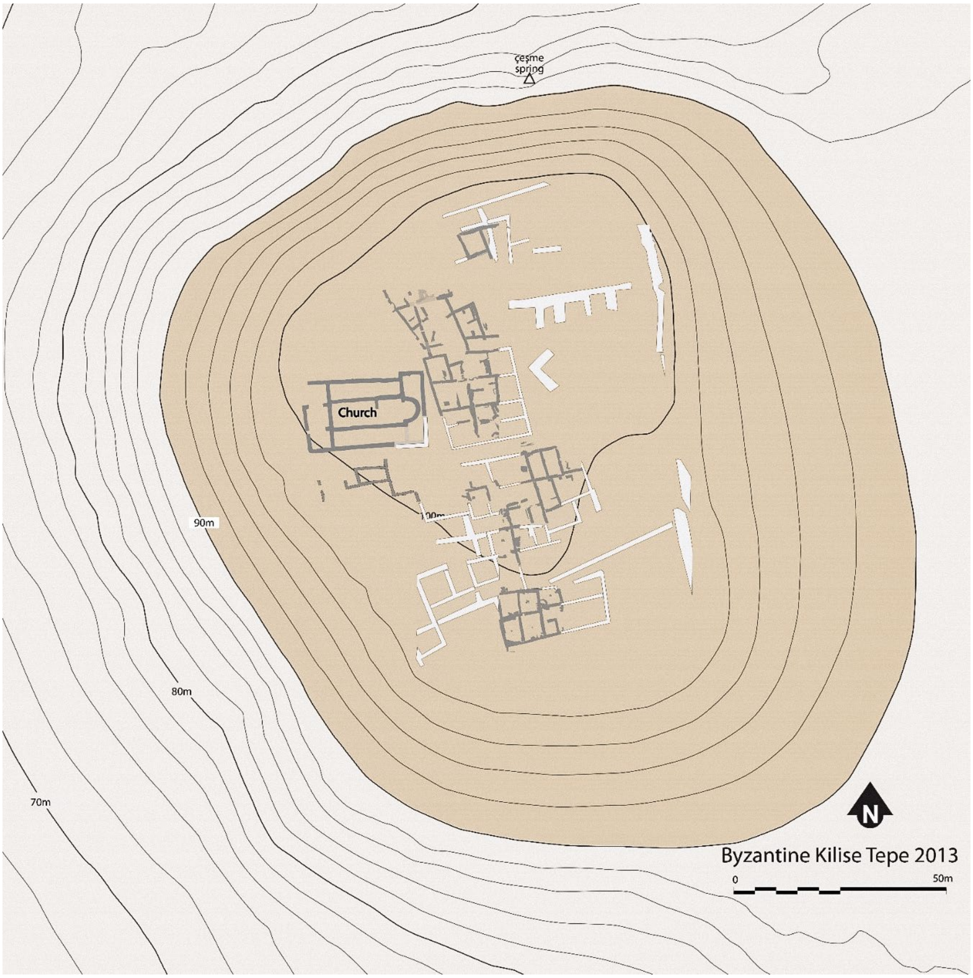


Fig 4.4 Plan of the mound with Byzantine buildings at Kilise Tepe

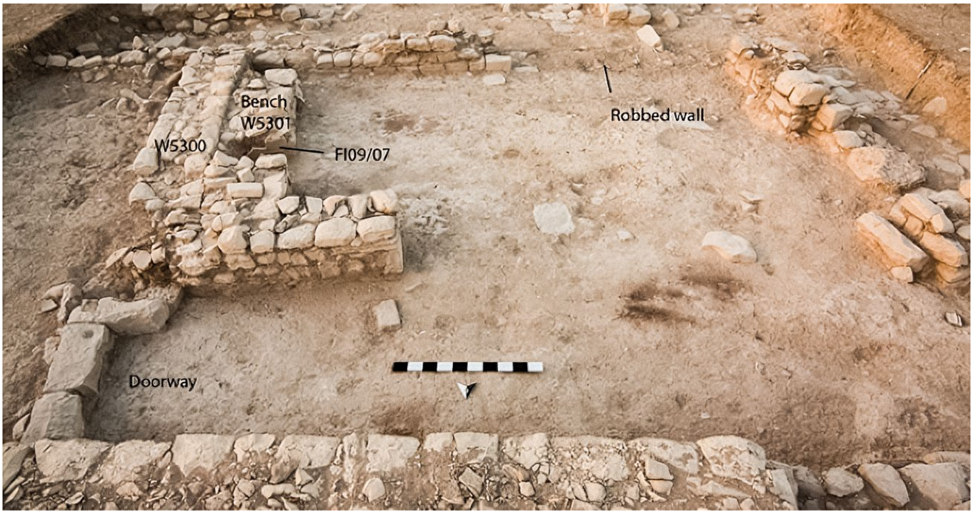


Fig 4.5 Excavated space in area M17 showing features but where few objects were excavated in situ (Photo: Bob Miller)

Kilise Tepe Excavation: Area M17

A substantial building with a central courtyard occupied an important location immediately East of the church in area M17 (Figure 4.5). In spite of stone robbing in recent decades, many of the original features were preserved in this building, but we found very few complete artefacts surviving in its rooms. This is surprising because the situation in the rooms of this structure stands in contrast to that in other parts of the site during the same phase since in many of the other spaces artefacts were found in association with the rooms.

Michael Schiffer famously argued that 'most sites are not little Pompeiis' (1985: 38). In other words it is very unusual in archaeological contexts to find all the artefacts as they might have been used by the occupants lying on the floors of an abandoned building. He argued that 'artefacts can come into floor contact through many processes and that a variety of cultural formation processes can cause de facto refuse assemblages to be 'depleted' relative to systematic inventories (Schiffer 1985: 38). It seems that the rooms of the building in M17 had been deliberately cleared out in antiquity. This may have happened, in part at least, at the point of abandonment. Schiffer refers to this as 'Curate behaviour' i.e. the carrying of items at abandonment to the next place of occupation. There seems to be no sign of refuse thrown in at the time or subsequently. Indeed, there was little sign of secondary refuse here or in other parts of the site that could be used to identify the presence of any remaining inhabitants of the settlement. Flotation of soil samples from two fire installations in the building yielded short-lived organic material that was used for radiocarbon dating. Seeds from the ash of Fire Installation FI09/07 on the east side of the building revealed a date between the end of the 6th century and the early in the second half of the 7th century (Beta – 474498; dated 1410 +/- 30 BP. 597 (95.4%) 664 cal CE).

While there were few artefacts found in the rooms associated with these fire installations, this date range is very interesting. In this room it may be taken to suggest the final use of the fire installation. Indeed it matches well the dates from a range of other radiocarbon dates and artefacts from across the site identified in the same phase.

There is evidence of the collapse of the building fabric. The stone wall in the SW corner of the building identified in area M16a immediately to the south of M17 had slumped onto the paved floor. The accumulation of a distinctive layer of fine dust here, similar to that noted by excavators in rooms elsewhere, may derive from a period of abandonment before the walls finally collapsed. It is not clear whether there may have been looting of this building to clear it out in ancient times, but the presence of objects on the floors of other rooms would seem to suggest that the household artefacts we might expect to have found in this building had been removed deliberately at the point of abandonment or subsequently before the building collapsed. While the building had been subject to a certain amount of stone robbing, probably within the last century, the robber trenches were identified by the excavators and seem largely to have been created by the chasing of particular walls leaving distinctive robber trenches and leaving much of the building complex itself untouched.

Kilise Tepe Excavation: O14–N14 room

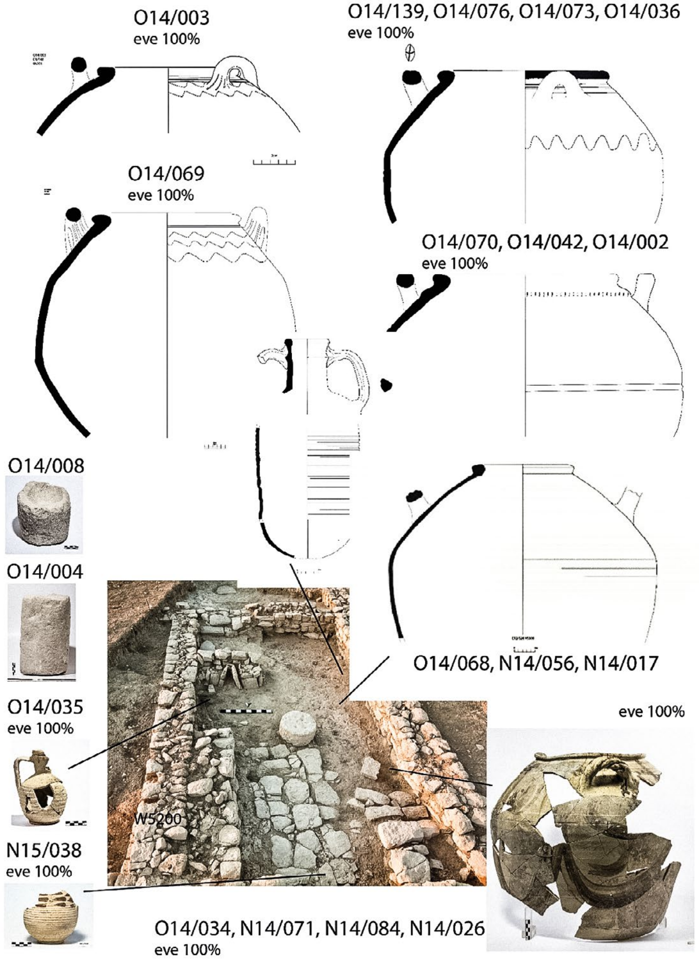

O14/003
eve 100%
O14/139, O14/076, O14/073, O14/036
eve 100%
O14/069
eve 100%
O14/070, O14/042, O14/002
eve 100%
O14/008
O14/004
O14/035
eve 100%
N15/038
eve 100%
W5200
O14/068, N14/056, N14/017
eve 100%
O14/034, N14/071, N14/084, N14/026
eve 100%

Fig 4.6 Objects and their excavated locations room in area N14–O14 (Photo: Bob Miller; illustrations M. Jackson)

The room in area O14–N14 had various features that were clearly preserved: two doorways, one of which at the north end of the west wall gave access to stone steps leading down into the room (Figure 4.6). A stone and mud-bench lay against the north end of the east wall, and another bench running across the room incorporated a fire installation. Within this room, as in other spaces in the same phase, we excavated an assemblage of everyday household objects. In each case we can demonstrate that 100% of the rims and, or bases of broken vessels was present which can be used to show that, although all found in pieces, they were complete when they were broken in the room.

The relationships of these objects, with each other and with the features of the spaces in which they were found, begin to help us to consider the final stages of occupation and abandonment of the people who dwelt at this settlement and the activities practiced by people in this understudied period.

A wild seed in burnt material KT09/34 O14/077 (95211) was radiocarbon dated in an attempt to provide an independent date for the final use of the fire installation in the room. (Beta – 474495); dated 1450 +/- 30 BP. 571 (95.4%) 651 cal CE. This date accords well with that from the burnt material in M17 and the *terminus post quem* dates provided by coins minted at the end of the 6th century found in the trenches.

The nature of the evidence in this room however would suggest that it was not abandoned in a single event. While the discovery of the objects on the floors does seem to suggest that they had been abandoned, the nature of their preservation suggests that there were elements of subsequent damage and disturbance. A large storage jar O14/034 with relatively thin walls was recovered at the foot of the stairs where the sherds were lying flat but broken on the ground in a way that suggested they had been trampled and broken in situ on the floor after the vessel had broken. Furthermore, six large pithoi storage jars with very thick walls were smashed and left mostly in the south-east corner of the room. Breaking these vessels could not have happened without considerable force. It seems likely that two heavy stone objects found with them: a limestone mortar and roof roller may have been used to break them deliberately. 100% of all these storage jars were found in the room but importantly a few pithos sherds were found on the north side of the partition wall. The discovery of joining sherds on both sides of the partition wall emphasises that the vessels were broken with considerable force. It is unclear from the pithoi whether they were smashed by the inhabitants of the rooms at the point of departure or subsequently but the presence of the trampled sherds from O14/034 would appear to suggest that at least some of the activity in this room took place after the breaking of the objects. Even if the exact circumstances of the abandonment are unclear these vessels do lend insight into at least some of the key features and artefacts present in the room before its abandonment.

Kilise Tepe Excavation: O15a room

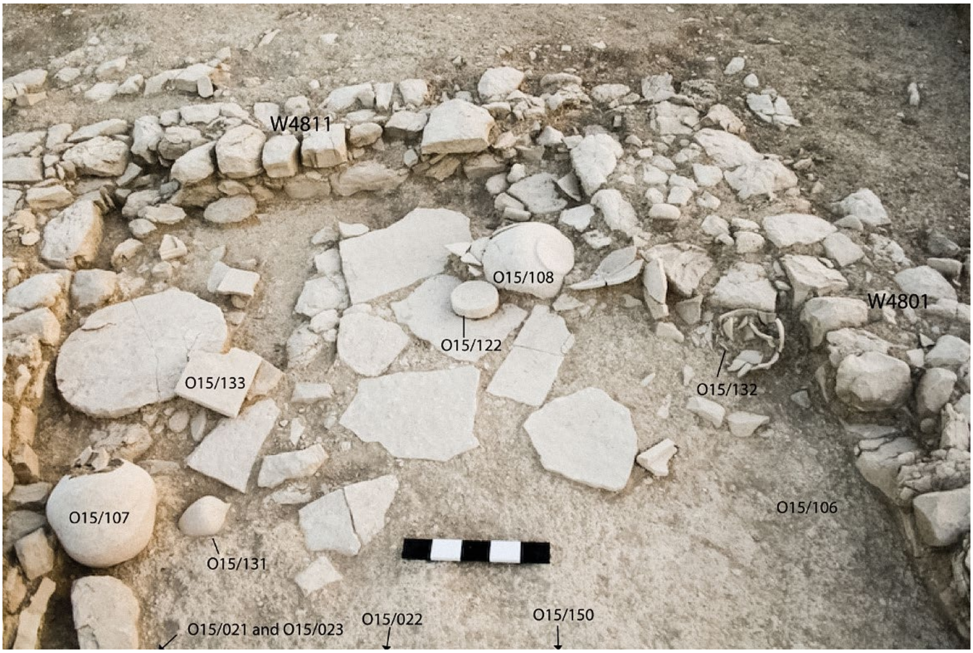
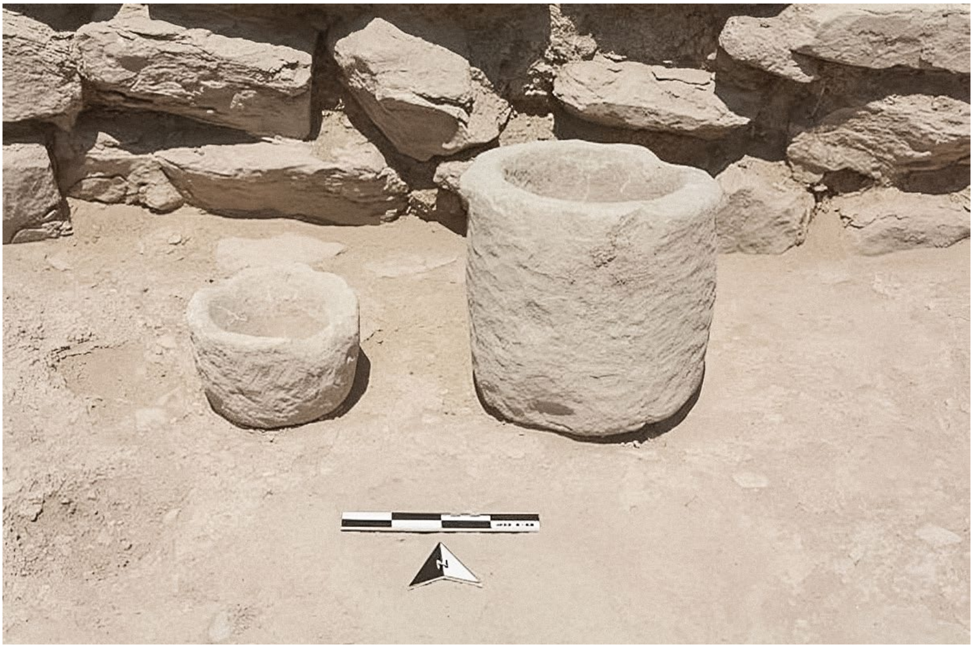
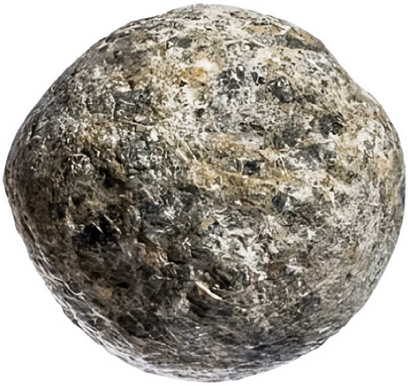


Fig 4.7 Objects in situ on the floor in area O15a (Photo: Bob Miller)

In the room in area O15a located southeast of the church at least eight complete vessels were found lying *in situ* on floor (Figure 4.7). Several of these vessels may have been placed formerly on a stone and mudbrick bench built in the northeast corner of the room; these were found lying largely complete but broken on the floor, while those on the west side of the room were largely intact except perhaps for damage done to them from relatively recent ploughing of the mound. A Cu-alloy object the purpose of which is uncertain was found in this assemblage. While the function of this artefact is unclear the fact that this copper-alloy object was left behind prompts us to consider why such a metal object that might have been worth recycling was left behind. Schiffer noted that scavenging affects the composition of *de facto* refuse assemblages but in this case it is interesting that ceramic vessels and what may have been a reasonably valuable piece of metal that one might expect to have been recyclable seems to have been left behind and then not scavenged after abandonment.

Kilise Tepe Excavations: O11 and O12





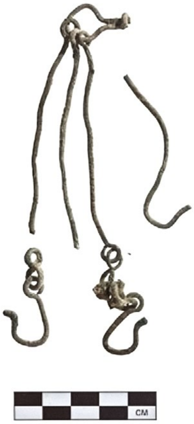
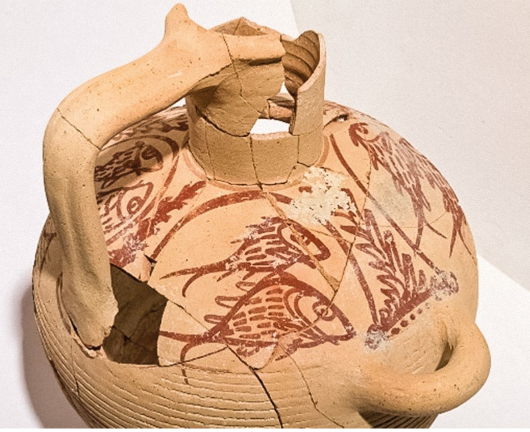


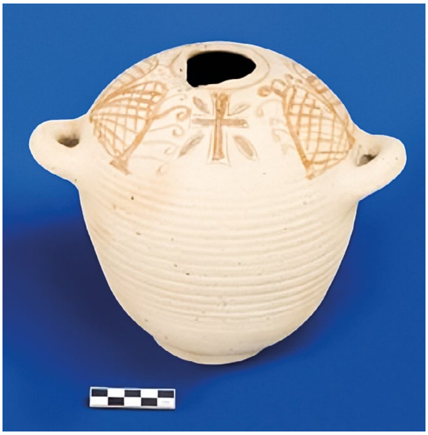
Fig 4.8a (Top) Limestone mortars, objects O12/057 and O12/058.
Fig 4.8b (Bottom left) Stone pounder, object O11/032 (12304).
Fig 4.8c (Bottom right) Lamp chain, object O11/064.
(Photos: Bob Miller)

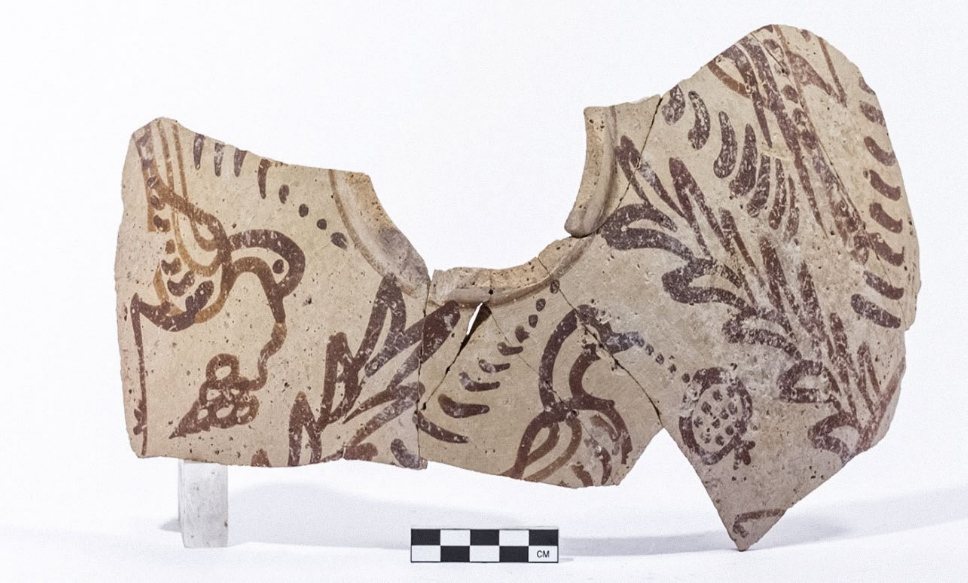
Elsewhere on the site in areas O11 and O12 artefacts found close to fire installations FI11/7 and FI11/12 which were set into a mudbrick and stone bench, included a round stone interpreted as a pounder e.g. O11/032 (12304), two mortars O12/057 and O12/058 (Fig. 7a, b). These artefacts appear to have been left by the fire installations where they would have been ready for use as part of the equipment for food preparation. A lamp chain O11/064 (Fig. 7c) and several juglets also found on the floor nearby seem also to have been part of this domestic assemblage.

Together the artefacts from these rooms present a reasonably consistent pattern of finds in inorganic materials especially pottery, stone and Cu alloy. The location of the site and its context, together with the material culture affords understanding of tasks and experiences usually neglected by Byzantine archaeologists. We can interpret evidence for artefacts used for carrying out daily tasks such as collecting water, preparing food or cooking. Such household items often featured elements of decoration which employed symbols thought to be powerful signs in-and-of themselves. Wear and function reveal that most of these items were used repeatedly by people as part of their daily toil so that they become something of an extension of the person. These household items made for a lifetime of work have come down to us because their context is one of devastation and desolation. In a world of both human and supernatural threat, the abandonment of important daily items is interesting. These objects need to be understood as appropriate for this particular environment and integral to the lives of the people at Kilise Tepe…up to a point – when they could be left behind. Byzantine ceramics, for example, made from local clay, by potters in the community, and decorated with distinctive motifs would have shaped the identity of the community and perhaps even of their village until many were abandoned in the houses where they lay until excavated (Figure 4.9a–c).

The locally-made decorated water vessels recall the repeated journeys made to collect water from the spring at the north end of the mound; they may reflect perhaps gendered activities; so often the heavy work of carrying water falls to women and children. The symbols decorated on these vessels are expressions of the worldviews of the people who made and used them. Faunal assemblages reveal the role of animal husbandry and especially the raising of sheep and goats which would have provided important secondary products including milk, cheese and material for textiles. Animal bones also testify to hunting and fishing. Storage pits reveal the role of crop growing and the processing and storage of grain. Managing and procuring wood from the surrounding landscape would have been important for construction materials and for fuel. Any dislocation of the population from here to elsewhere would have ruptured patterns of life and behaviour which would have been passed down through the generations and been connected to stories of people and the place in earlier times. All labour-intensive embodied activities, the use of these artefacts would have become linked to identity. Rebuilding lives elsewhere without such familiar structures







Water vessels decorated with images of landscape and life:
fish, foliage, birds and, crosses

Fig 4.9a (Top left) N11/076 (12205).
Fig 4.9b (Top right) O15/021 (73311).
Fig 4.9c (Bottom) (N11/154 (12224)).

would likely cause considerable trauma. Papadopoulos has examined the potential for 'onto-ecological unsettledness' when moving to a new place. Understanding of the landscape around Kilise Tepe helps us to appreciate that onto-ecological unsettledness would have been experienced by the inhabitants resettling elsewhere from this landscape context (Papadopoulos 2021: 31).

A recent case study from a very different context provides helpful insights. Work in Karenni refugee camps on the Thai side of the border with Burma has shown the importance of maintaining elements of continuity from former lives in an unfamiliar place. Settlements built by some of the 18,218 Karenni refugees employed similar materials and architectural designs to those in their former homes. Wooden floors, for example, provided a familiar feel of 'home' under bare feet and the repetitive actions and concentration involved in operating a loom seem to have provided a sense of continuity and perhaps agency through weaving. Such familiar domestic elements in new and unfamiliar places seem to have been important elements of continuity that helped those faced with traumatic life-changing situations. 'Fundamental to the familiarity created by all of these practices, processes and objects, indeed what makes them familiar at all, is that they feel familiar, in material and sensory terms'. (Dudley 2011: 746).

When we consider the evidence from Kilise Tepe we can see signs of abandonment across the site at the end of the early Byzantine phase. We do not know where the people living at Kilise Tepe in the 7th century moved to, but given the long periods of continued occupation at the site it seems unlikely that a whole settlement would be abandoned without considerable due cause. The evidence left at the site provides some insights into the manner of abandonment. I would argue that rebuilding a similar life elsewhere would have entailed significant changes for the inhabitants because of the unique environment offered by the Göksu Valley. The possibility of emotional trauma at the loss of home and possessions in the face of seems high, but secondary to the need to move.

No doubt those living at Kilise Tepe lived with stories passed down over generations and perhaps centuries. The inherent continuity afforded by the environment and evidenced in some of the key remains in this part of the valley provides proxy evidence that helps to convey why people would choose to make this their home and therefore emphasises the significance of rupture and dislocation. While the items might be useful in other contexts it would have been difficult to recreate the unique experience of living at Kilise Tepe anywhere else.

It is not easy to appreciate how the inhabitants of Kilise Tepe might have made sense of involuntary dislocation. Numerous refugees are known to have fled the Persian invasions of the eastern provinces (Theodoropoulos 2020: 262–263). Subsequently extensive migration is recorded in the chronicles following the Arab conquest (Theodoropoulos 2020: 265). The eastern area of Cilicia became part of the early Islamic caliphate and monks, for example, from Cilicia are known to have fled to Rome (cited in Theodoropoulos 2020: 264).

The worldview of people in this society would have included an appreciation of the idea of divine authority - sovereignty over other life forces. Images of Creation decorating water vessels made at Kilise Tepe together with representations of crosses reveal a conscious connection between physical and supernatural worlds, between earthy life and the divine. As the Byzantine historian John Haldon has written, 'For 'average' medieval people – whether in the west or in the Byzantine world – what we might deem the supernatural (a miracle, a vision, a prophesy or a dream) was taken as entirely real, as a natural element of the everyday world. It is perfectly possible to believe in demons and evil spirits, in the power of an amulet or of prayer to ward off evil, in the strength of one's faith to preserve one's kin or city or army from disaster, and at the same time to act in an entirely pragmatic way in order to achieve certain ends – as we see in every account of east Roman strategic politics and military activity' (Haldon 2016: 14). That God was understood to have supreme agency in enabling events with both positive and negative consequences is clear from discussions of a variety of events in the period: from earthquakes and volcanic eruptions to plague and enemy attack. Likewise judgement, destruction and exile, are concepts that are significant in the Jewish and Christian scriptures that would have been familiar to early Byzantine communities. Old Testament prophesies such as that of Daniel and Jeremiah were used, for example, in the 7th century in the apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius to understand the Arab conquest which was attributed as retribution for sexual sin (Kaegi 1969: 143–144). While explanations for devastation were to be found in biblical eschatology – often as a result of sin, biblical prophesies point forward to a hope of a New Earth without suffering and the trials of 'this' world. Explicit reference to an earthly future in which peace would return was applied, for example, to Cilicia and Isauria, 'The earth, which they had desolated, will be at peace and each man will return to his own property and to that of his fathers. Armenia, Cilicia, Isauria, Africa, Hellas, Sicily and everyone who was abandoned will return to his property and to that of his fathers' (cited Kaegi 1969: 145). Individuals make sense of devastating circumstances in varied ways; an appreciation of Byzantine worldviews may point to themed responses that some people may have had to such events.

Conclusions

The domestic assemblages recovered from rooms across the site at Kilise Tepe can be taken to demonstrate that there was abandonment of the site in the 7th century CE. While it is not clear what kinds of organic possessions might have been left, the abandonment of many ceramic, glass, stone and some metal objects which must have represented a substantial proportion of household accoutrements and many of the heavier items would suggest that only necessities were taken as part of what may well have been an evacuation. Their abandonment may also be taken to suggest that return to carry these away was either not possible or not practical. It is possible that the deliberate destruction of some of this material culture – such as large storage vessels – was caused by the inhabitants seeking to leave nothing behind for others, or it might have been destruction caused by non-inhabitants after the abandonment. The fact that some rooms seem to have vessels intact whereas others seem to have been deliberately destroyed demonstrates that the destruction was not comprehensive but the relinquishment and breakage of so many objects seem to have happened in reasonably close succession. The evidence points to initially destructive events followed by desolation of the place for several centuries.

While the residents seem to have deliberately relocated, any movement away from a long-held home goes beyond merely physical displacement and seems to warrant description as dislocation. Given its exceptional location and position in the Göksu Valley, the abandonment of such a unique settlement provides us indirectly at least with insights into the personal, experiential and emotional loss of abandoning home. In the 7th century, the security situation would have been such that it seems reasonable to imagine that the population out of necessity either voluntarily or involuntarily relocated to a safer vantage point.

It seems unlikely given the security situation and the attractions of their home that the occupants of Kilise Tepe would have been able to move to another position close by in the lower Göksu Valley. Most likely they found themselves in a new place with a very different kind of landscape situation. The implication of moving to any new environment probably outside the Mut basin is that the everyday lives of the inhabitants of this community would have been completely changed. While members might have acted with agency in leaving and indeed might have been able to act with considerable agency in their new context, any shift in context is likely to have resulted in a considerable break in the existing patterns of subsistence.

How this forced dislocation might have been understood is not easy to interpret but life at Kilise Tepe would have to have been replaced by memories. The interruption of routine tasks would likely have disturbed also the relationships, stories, songs and ideas associated with performing routine activities in a place that until that point seems to have had continuity for generations. The emotional impact of such a change is difficult to appreciate but not to imagine. While we can assume that a society at this period would have a strong a sense of divine will and may have attempted to comprehend from a religious perspective, it seems reasonable to suggest that any such decision to abandon a settlement for a new landscape context must have resulted in significant destruction not only of the landscape itself but also of long-held tangible and intangible connections with landscape. Evidence for physical and emotional devastation is found in the fragments we find preserved in the destruction deposits they left behind.

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Biography

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5. The Interplay of Memory and Landscape: Cultural Landscapes of Iraqi Syriacs and Chaldeans

Niveen Kassem, Vean Al-Saka, Rawaa Qasha
and Mark Jackson

Keywords Chaldeans; Syriacs; Iraq; Alqosh; Bartella; Mar Behnam; Rabban Hormizd; collective memory; cultural landscape; heritage; Aramaic language

Abstract This study explores the relationship between human memory and a surrounding physical landscape, highlighting their combined influence on the shaping of a collective cultural memory and their role in the reinforcement of community identities. Landscapes act as testimonies embodying both the physical place itself and the intangible values and memories invested by communities who have spent their lives there. These landscapes have become intrinsically linked to the historical events, cultural traditions, experiences and memories of both current and previous generations. Our specific focus is on the experience of Iraqi Chaldean and Syriac Arameans (speakers of Aramaic); ancient Christian communities which have endured frequent and prolonged periods of assault and regular displacement and destruction of their ancient historical and religious landscapes in what is now modern-day southern Turkey, Central Iraq, Iran and Syria. Although most of these community members now live abroad as part of a significant diaspora, their collective sense of the memory and landscape of their origins remains vital and robust. These memories, regardless of their emotional connotations, serve as shared cultural markers for Syriacs and Chaldeans. The study will suggest that the aforesaid fusion of landscape and ingrained communal memories not only fosters communal resilience both in the Christian areas of Iraq and amongst exiles, but also serves as a testament to the historical experiences of these communities.

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Syriacs and Chaldeans: Some Context and Historical and Recent Displacement

Assyrians, Chaldeans and Syriacs of Iraq share a Christian identity and the use of one of the most ancient languages (Sūreth – the vernacular Aramaic dialects – as it is known in the emic sense) (Donabed 2012) which sets them apart linguistically and provides a distinct thread of cultural heritage and continuity. The origin and use of the appellations 'Assyrian', 'Chaldean' and 'Syriac/Aramean' are both complex and, according to Hanoosh (2016), 'contentious'. Hanoosh points out that although there are distinct Christian doctrinal differences between them, all three communities share a commonality in a claim to the ancient Aramaic language (spoken by Christ). The choice of Chaldeans and Syriacs as the focal points of this paper is because the shared landscape data pertain to interviewees in exile in the UK and locals in Iraq originating from these two specific Christian communities.

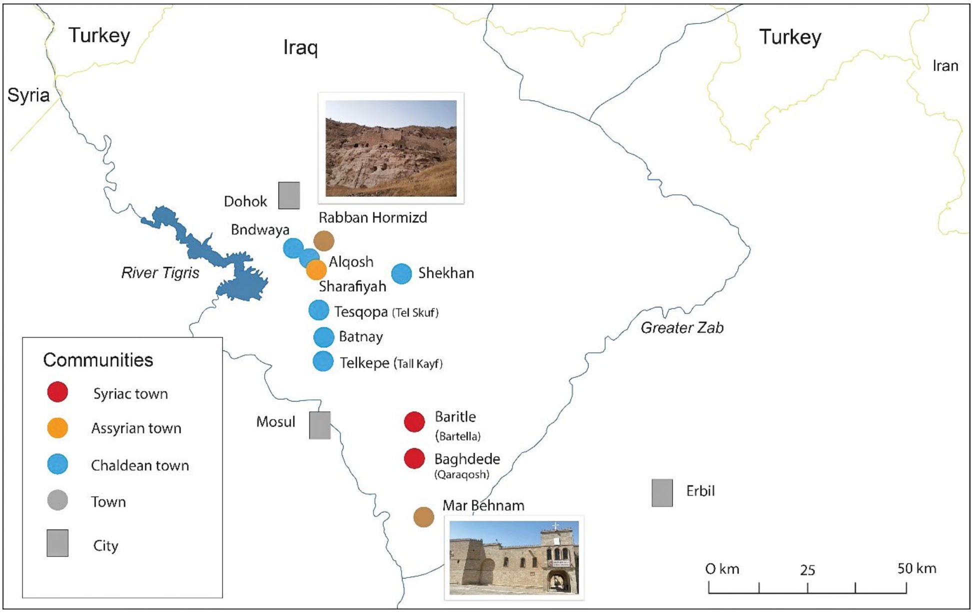
Turkey
Iraq
Turkey
Iran
Syria
Dohok
Rabban Hormizd
Bndwaya
Alqosh
Sharafiyah
Shekhan
River Tigris
Tesqopa (Tel Skuf)
Batnay
Telkepe (Tall Kayf)
Greater Zab
Communities
Syriac town
Assyrian town
Chaldean town
Town
City
Mosul
Baritle (Bartella)
Baghdede (Qaraqosh)
Mar Behnam
Erbil
0 km
25
50 km

Fig 5.1 Map showing the distribution of the discussed communities and their important religious landmarks: Rabban Hormizd and Mar Behnam
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The history of these communities is tragically marked by centuries of conquest and violence, culminating in massacres and displacement from territories between 1914–1920. It is estimated that a quarter of a million people were killed and a roughly similar number displaced and expelled from their homes (Mutlu-Numansen and Ossewarde 2020). Mass displacement and expulsion occurred from across what is now southeastern Turkey including villages in the remote Hakkâri mountains to Northern Iraq, through dangerous routes, which led to the loss of many lives on the road to safety (Donabed 2015). This was followed by another forced relocation into camps within Iraq during the British mandate (Dawood 2017). As these displaced communities were attempting to resettle in Iraq, they became subject to new waves of persecution as a result of their forced assimilation into a growing 'nationalist' culture among the dominant majority at that time within Iraq with the aim of creating a homogeneous 'Arabic' society. This pressure from above has led to the erosion of their identity and memory through the imposition of Arabic as the primary language of public communication. This attempt to assimilate ethnic minorities including Chaldeans and Syriacs into Arab society has resulted in both marginalisation from wider society and some disconnection from their own cultural heritage (Donabed 2012; Büyüksaraç 2015; Donabed and Shamiran Mako 2012; Travis 2006).

In the contemporary era, Syriacs and Chaldeans faced yet another existential threat which came with the events of 2003: the invasion of Iraq by the US-led coalition and subsequent instability and sectarian violence fuelling waves of enforced migration. It is estimated that two-thirds of the pre-2003 Iraqi Assyrian, Chaldean and Syriac population has now left the country, dispersing to destinations both nearby (Syria) and as far away as Western Europe, the USA and Australia (Donabed 2015). Further attacks by ISIS in 2014 on Mosul and the neighbouring Christian towns and villages in the Nineveh Plains brought more upheaval to the remaining Chaldean and Syriac communities and led to a further significant decrease in their numbers in the region (Fleming 2014)

Despite ongoing efforts by these communities to keep their religious traditions alive and to maintain traditions of liturgy and ritual (Murre-van den Berg 2010; Donabed 2015), external attacks and assimilation pressures have made it challenging to preserve this heritage. In addition, the trauma experienced by Iraqi Syriacs and Chaldeans for decades still reverberates through generations and looms large in their collective consciousness, leaving an indelible mark on the collective memory of the community and profoundly shaping their identity (Kassem and Jackson 2020). As speakers of Aramaic, one of the most ancient languages in the world, many members of these communities view themselves as the descendants of ancient Mesopotamians and are proud of their rich heritage (Donabed 2015). Syriacs and Chaldeans have demonstrated considerable resilience throughout history in maintaining their cultural identity amidst rapidly shifting power dynamics in the region (Kassem, Jackson and Atkinson-Phillips 2023; Naby 1977).

Collective Memory and Identity Formation

Collective memory refers to the shared memories and representations of the past that are held by a community or group of people (Halbwachs 1976). It shapes a group's identity, influences its behaviour, and plays a role in the construction of historical narratives (Olick 1999). When members of a community identify themselves with a shared history, this narrative helps to shape their identity, fostering a sense of belonging and unity (Assmann 2011). This common heritage forms the basis of a collective identity, which is crucial in the formation of social, national, or cultural identities.

Collective memory also extends to traumatic events, such as wars and natural disasters, which can have a profound impact on the collective consciousness of a society (Eyerman 2004). When the narratives of these events are passed down through generations, they become a part of the collective memory and folklore of a nation, further shaping its distinct identity (Zerubavel 1996). In addition, rituals, and other cultural practices contribute to the preservation and transmission of collective memory (Connerton 1989). Connerton suggests that through repeated actions, such as commemorative ceremonies, a group reinforces and strengthens its shared understanding and interpretation of the past.

As a social construct, collective memory is linked with the physical environment, particularly with the landscape. Therefore, we can arrive at an understanding of how the landscape is seen not just as a physical space, but can also be thought of as 'cultural layers', rich in meanings and narratives that contribute to the formation, preservation, and transformation of collective memory (Mitchell 2002; Meinig 1979). Schama refers to landscape as a 'work of the mind' whose composition is 'built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock' (1995: 7).

Landscapes as Records of Collective Memory

Landscapes are often said to resemble 'palimpsests' because of the way they have been shaped to their current appearance by the usage and influence of generations of communities. However, this metaphor may not reveal the full story of a landscape and cause us to lose sight of the influence of some stages of settlement whose presence has been completely eradicated over time. Perhaps the simpler description of 'record' or 'partial record' might serve better. This idea has been explored by scholars (Tuan 2012; Jackson 1985; Schama 1995) who view landscapes as evolving narratives bearing witness to stories, events and rituals of generations past and present. Schama notes that it is challenging to find a topography which has not been 'substantially modified by human culture' (1995: 7). The added cultural layers over the years turn landscapes into a crucible for the collective memory of a community where its history and identity are forged and inscribed.

The intricate interplay between collective memory and the physical landscape constitutes a significant aspect of human experience. In this context, the landscape assumes the role of a tangible witness, bearing testimony to narratives woven through time. It serves as an ever-changing and evolving reflection of historical events and cultural practices and contributing to the collective memory of both individuals and communities. This reciprocal relationship between people and their environment reinforces a sense of belonging, anchoring both of them in a shared past, present, and future. Consequently, the landscape emerges as a foundational element in shaping individual and collective identities whilst also allowing future identities to take shape.

Within a particular landscape, the formation and shaping of the collective memories of a group of people accumulate over time. These special and often sacred places provide a spatial context to which recollections and narratives of the group's past become attached. Nora (1989) maintains that memories somehow become 'anchored' to these particular locations transforming them into accessible and vital parts of the shared culture of a particular group. In this way, they become designated 'sites of memory'; focal points where communal histories may be recalled, celebrated, and even contested. As argued by Mitchell (2002), landscapes can be seen as crucibles for memory, embodying both the history and experiences of a particular community.

Case studies of indigenous communities and diasporic groups indicate that certain landscapes may serve as communal memory 'anchors' (Johnson and Basso 1998; Cenoz and Gorter 2008). One of the meaningful ways in which community groups engage with a landscape is through preservation and commemoration. For example, in their study of Native American landscapes, Basso and others highlight how certain geographical features such as hills, cliffs or caves serve as totemic locations, reinforcing and preserving the stories and histories of indigenous peoples (Johnson and Basso 1998). Similarly, Cenoz and Gorter (2008) discuss how the Basque community in Spain uses place names as a means of preserving both their linguistic and cultural heritage, demonstrating the intimate relationship between language, memory, and landscape.

Minority groups, often marginalised and overlooked in mainstream narratives are no different in the way in which their collective memory becomes intertwined with the landscape. For these communities, landscapes tend to become perhaps even more meaningful and significant locations for presenting and asserting their own cultural presence and identity amidst the more dominant cultural narratives which may surround them. In addition to the importance of preservation and commemoration, minority groups may also establish a landscape as a site of contestation and resistance against what may be more dominant surrounding society narratives. Lefebvre (1991) discusses how some marginalised groups in urban environments often use everyday practices, such as graffiti and street performances, to contest dominant spatial narratives and assert their own presence in a cityscape; making the landscape their own and a physical embodiment of their shared culture.

The relationship between the collective memory of minority groups and their chosen landscape is a rich and multifaceted area of study which highlights the ways in which marginalised communities can engage with and shape their physical environment to better represent their collective memories, identities and experiences. By exploring this interplay, we can gain deeper insights into how memory, identity, and landscape are interconnected, ultimately contributing to a more nuanced and broader understanding of the importance of the sense of identity, cultural heritage and belonging.

In this study we consider the role of landscape in the collective memory of Iraqi Chaldean and Syriac communities. We examine how these communities have created landscapes which reflect their distinctive identity and how new cultural layers, and meanings are incorporated into their collective memory.

Methodology and Data Collection

The research adopted a descriptive analytical methodology, which gathered, scrutinised, and interpreted data pertaining to the cultural landscapes of the Chaldeans and Syriacs in Iraq. This methodological structure enabled the derivation of insightful generalisations. The research methodology incorporated the use of historical records, specifically archival materials from the Gertrude Bell archive at Newcastle University in the UK, complemented by a case study approach. Moreover, direct observations were undertaken by the authors and community members. Complementing these were questionnaires and interviews conducted with dignitaries and local inhabitants who reside within Iraq and in the diaspora and who shared relevant data (images; manuscripts; textbooks and art pieces). The questionnaires and interviews were initially conducted in 2017 as part of a project which explored the impact of WWI on minorities within the Middle East. Ethical protocols were reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee at Newcastle University. These interviews subsequently led to further engagement with additional community members in Iraq who also agreed to participate and provide us with up-to-date information for the further development of the subject. The aim was to gain insights into how these communities express their identity and memory. These community members expressed interest in sharing images and data that illustrate their practices. We believe that the landscape data shared by interviewees from these two communities is valuable and warrants further exploration.

Syriac and Chaldean Iraqi Communities: A Study of their Landscape, Collective Memory and Identity

Language Features and Distinct Identity: Their Echo in the Landscape

As we have seen, the process of enriching landscapes with the cultural 'marks' of a community emerges from intricate interactions between landscape components and human or social events within specific locations. As daily activities unfold repeatedly in a place, they gradually become embedded in the landscape's fabric, influencing human behaviour and shaping collective memory. Language, in particular, plays a pivotal role in this process, as it physically becomes part of the landscape, reflecting cultural heritage and identity.

Although for many decades the use of Syriac was largely restricted to inscriptions on religious buildings, the Syriac and Chaldean communities continued to maintain their heritage despite constraints imposed by the central government. However, since 2003 and the relaxation of previous cultural restrictions, there have been some initiatives from the local government to install bilingual road signs in Arabic and Syriac in the area of northern Iraq we consider in this paper. However, these initiatives have been deemed inadequate by the Syriac and Chaldean communities in ensuring the preservation of these communities' indigenous identities. Consequently, a bottom-up approach has emerged in recent years, reflecting the interest of these communities in embracing the learning of their endangered language, especially the written form of the language as they have actively used the written form of the Syriac language in public spaces, ensuring its continued presence and relevance. These developments have heightened awareness within the Chaldean and Syriac communities about the importance of preserving their identity, and this can be interpreted as a response to the recent and historical trauma these communities have endured for a century, strengthening their community cohesion and sense of belonging.

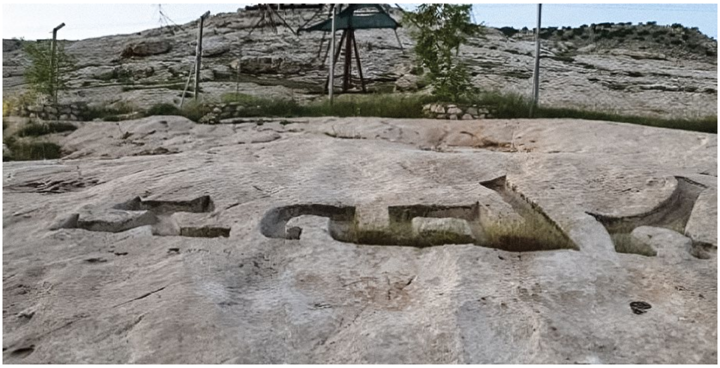
These linguistic elements of the landscape reflect the community's efforts to express their cultural identity, memory and heritage onto their landscape adding new cultural layers, values and meanings to the physical environment. In this way they create a landscape which embodies the memory and the heritage of the community. Despite the inevitable changes that landscapes may undergo, these linguistic imprints remain, serving as enduring symbols of cultural continuity and collective memory. The Chaldean and Syriac communities here have strived to keep their identity alive through religious rituals within the church and the oral transmissions of their culture and traditions. They have also employed a unique method of asserting their collective identity and reinforcing their connection with the landscape. Their language (Aramaic) has been etched not only into the physical fabric of their religious structures, but also the actual terrain which they inhabit. Through interviews and observations within the towns of Alqosh and Baritle (Bartella), we witness clear examples of how these communities have adapted their landscapes to resonate with their cultural heritage and identity.

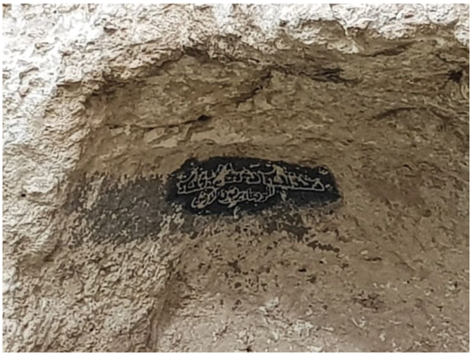
Nestled in the heart of the Nineveh Plains in northern Iraq, Alqosh is a town with a rich religious heritage. Located approximately 45 km north of Mosul and south of Dohuk (Kurdistan), it is home to around 3,750 Chaldean Catholics and speakers of colloquial Syriac (a form of Aramaic). Additionally, the town has several Christian churches, monasteries, and shrines. Amongst these, St. George's Church and St. Michael's Church stand out in the Old Quarter. The church of St. Qardagh can be found in the new neighbourhood. Nearby, about one kilometre to the south, lies the Monastery of Our Lady Hafizat Al-Zurua', associated with the Chaldean Antonian Order of St. Hormizd. The town is also home to the Monastery of Al-Fadi (the Redeemer) in the west, Rabban Hormizd Monastery, one of the oldest and most significant monasteries in the Nineveh Plain region (of which more detail follows below), as well as the Monastery of Dominican Nuns and the Monastery of Chaldean Nuns of Mary's Daughters.

As mentioned, Alqosh has weathered significant challenges both in the more distant past and in very recent times. Despite these hardships, it remains a defiant stronghold for Chaldeans. What sets Alqosh apart is its determination and commitment to preserving Aramaic, the spoken form of Syriac. Aramaic, an ancient Semitic language, has survived here despite the tumultuous events that have forced the Christians to flee and caused their language to come under threat of extinction, especially in more recent times. As part of a community initiative, a Chaldean family has physically inscribed the town's name in Aramaic onto the landscape at Alqosh Mountain. The inscription spans 3 meters in length, 1.5 meters in width, and has a depth of 0.3 meters (Figure 5.2). This act can be seen as a testament to the resilience of the community and their determination to keep their language alive, even in the face of adversity. It serves as a tangible documentation of their language, embedding it into the consciousness of the community identifying and preserving it for future generations and, quite literally, supports Schama when he compares landscape to a text upon which 'generations write their recurring obsessions' (1995: 12).

This practice extends beyond mere place names. The same family have also engraved verses from the Bible on the walls of caves within the Rabban Hormizd Monastery (Figures 5.3; 5.4). This act of deliberate inscription is not merely an artistic endeavour; it is a profound expression of the community's strong and enduring connection with the landscape, their religious identity, and their heritage. The inscriptions serve multiple purposes: they act as a testament to the community's resilience as well as a commitment to preserving their culture and language. They also serve as a constant reminder of their strong historical and spiritual ties to the landscape. Furthermore, they ensure that the community's language and collective memory are passed down to future generations, thereby preserving their unique identity.

The practice of carving language into the landscape by the Chaldean family in Alqosh and the Rabban Hormizd Monastery indicates the strength of their enduring connection with their land, their faith, and their collective memory. It underlines the significant role of language and landscape in shaping and preserving a community's identity and heritage.





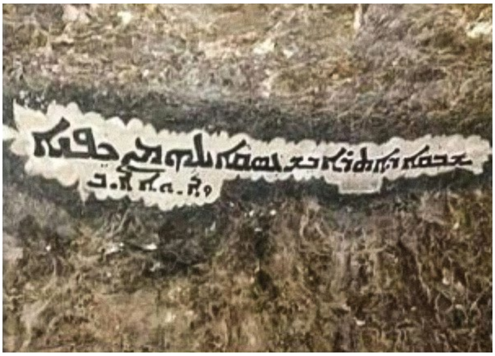


Fig 5.2 (Top) Alqosh mountain- showing Aramaic text inscribed on the mountain. 2024. Translation: 'Alqosh'

Fig 5.3 (Bottom left) A cave in Rabban Hormizd monastery. 2024. Aramaic script can be translated as: 'The meek shall inherit the earth'

Fig 5.4 (Bottom right) A cave in Rabban Hormizd monastery. 2024. The Aramaic script reads: 'I am the way, the truth and the life' from the New Testament

Beyond this, and within the landscape of Alqosh town, the Aramaic language emerges, etched onto some tombstones in one of the old cemeteries of Alqosh: ‘Alqosh Old Cemetery’. According to members of the Alqosh community, this is an important historic site in the town containing hundreds of graves with many of them having Aramaic inscriptions on them[1]. These memorial inscriptions carry significant symbolic weight for the community and the families of the departed, reflecting cultural heritage and a sense of identity and continuity. According to one of the local people of the town, due to the importance of this site, the people of Alqosh and the priests of the church organise an annual visit to the cemetery on the Friday before the end of Lent, which includes historical hymns and visits by the people to the graves of their relatives and friends with flowers and candles. The cemeteries, repositories of history, negotiate the community’s presence within the broader expanse of Iraq. Even in their silent form, these linguistic markers weave together the fabric of collective memory and identity forming an important part of the cultural landscape.

Another example which illustrates the adaptation of the landscape to reflect the heritage and identity of these communities in Iraq is from the town of Baritle (known as Bartella in Arabic), an historic town situated approximately 20 kilometres east of Mosul. Situated on the Nineveh Plain, Baritle holds historical significance as one of the earliest towns to embrace Christianity. Notably, Baritle has deep-rooted connections to the Monastery of St. Matthew (Dayro d-Mor Mattai), which stands as one of the oldest Christian monasteries, established around AD383. Before the ISIS assault on Mosul, the Syriac population numbered around 3,500 families. However, since the crisis, the Syriac community has dwindled to approximately 1,000 families.

Since 2014, the Syriacs in Baritle, like the Chaldeans of Alqosh, have set about reshaping their surroundings to better reflect their heritage and identity. Public and religious spaces within the town proudly showcase the distinct identity of Iraqi Syriacs, serving as a reminder of their vibrant linguistic heritage. This is evident through banners and signs displayed in schools, sports centres, and social clubs, as depicted in Figures 5.5 and 5.6.

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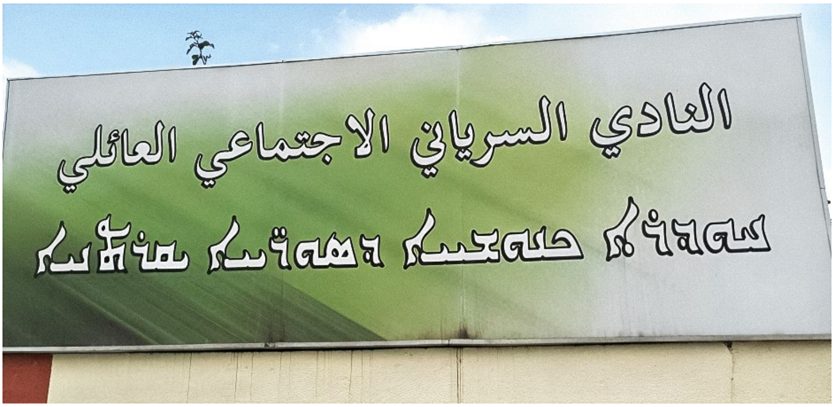
[1] Owing to the deterioration and fragmentation of many older stone graves in the cemetery, we were unable to determine the exact date of the cemetery. However, local elders in Alqosh believe the cemetery dates back to 300 years ago.


النادي السرياني الاجتماعي العائلي

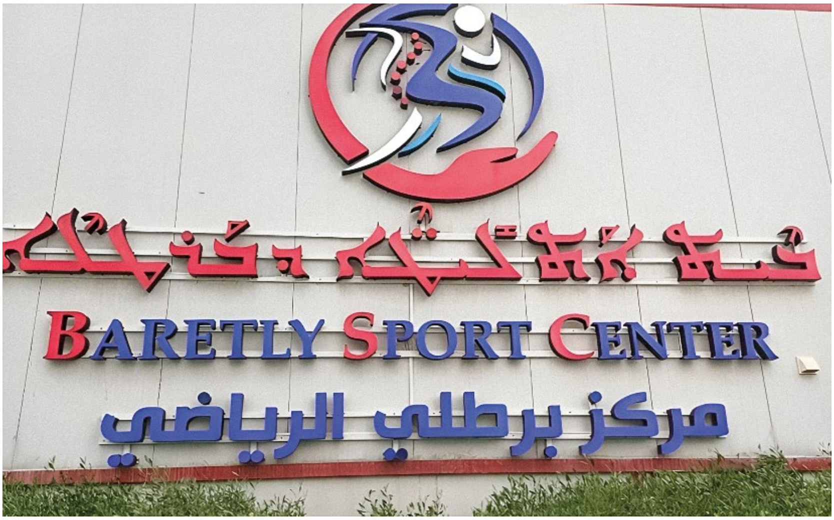

BARETLY SPORT CENTER
مركز برطلي الرياضي

Fig 5.5 (Top) Sign displaying a text written in Arabic and Syriac. 2024. Translation: 'Syriac Family Social Club of Baritle'

Fig 5.6 (Bottom) Sign displaying text in three languages; Syriac, English and Arabic. 2024. Translation: Baritle Sport Centre

These banners and signs, inscribed in both Arabic and Syriac, hold cultural significance, shaping the community members' self-perception within their landscape. The deliberate use of Syriac on these banners reinforces its collective identity and heritage.

Collective memory, which can be defined as the shared interpretations of the past that contribute to shaping a community's collective identity, is manifested in the environment when we retrieve and construct collective memories (Halbwachs 1976). In the context of Baritle, these bilingual banners and signs serve as tangible reminders of the community's shared history and culture.

The examples shared from Alqosh and Baritle involve inscribing words, often of significant cultural, social, religious or historical value, onto physical landscapes such as buildings, or natural features. This act of inscription not only marks the landscape but also embeds the language, and by extension the culture it represents, into the physical environment itself. The examples presented demonstrate a prevalence of bottom-up rather than top-down indicators, elucidating the disparities inherent in dominant language policies advocating for the exclusive use of a single national language.

In the context of Iraqi Chaldean and Syriacs, this concept takes on a profound significance. The vast majority of Iraqi Chaldeans and Syriacs are indigenous speakers of colloquial Syriac. By engraving words or scripts in Syriac onto their landscapes, they reinforce their connection to the ancient narrative of their landscape, adding extra cultural layers and meanings to reinforce their distinctive cultural identity. This act of inscription serves multiple purposes. Firstly, it acts as a constant reminder of their historical roots and distinctive cultural identity. Secondly, it serves as a form of resistance against cultural assimilation and a way to preserve their ancient heritage. More importantly, it fosters a sense of community among the speakers of the language, strengthening their collective identity and memory.

Exploring the Role of Religious and Historical Landscapes in Sustaining Collective Identity and Memory

Religious sites, often regarded as the core of a community's cultural and spiritual life, have a fundamental role in shaping and transmitting the identity of communities. They add meanings and deep cultural layers to their surrounding landscapes, thereby contributing to the collective memory of the community. Most older historical settlements within a landscape will have at their heart an original sacred structure. This will be a physical place of worship (often built on top of previous sacred places) which has become a mainstay of the rich cultural fabric and collective memory of a community.

These religious sites, steeped in history and tradition, have witnessed the ebb and flow of civilisations. Each epoch of the city's history is woven into the fabric of these sites, adding depth to their cultural significance. As new generations come to these sites to worship, they are not just participating in religious rituals; they are also engaging with the past, adding their own stories to the cultural narrative of the place. Moreover, religious sites often serve as catalysts for community cohesion. They provide a sense of belonging and identity, reinforcing the shared values and beliefs that bind a community together. The rituals and traditions associated with these sites become part of the community's collective memory, shaping its identity and sense of place (Taylor 2007). These religious sites contribute significantly to the cultural landscape of a community. Sacred places, as physical embodiments of shared experiences, can play a crucial role as a locus in preserving the collective memory of historical events, reinforcing identity, and expressing resilience for modern Iraqi Chaldeans and Syriacs. They act as constant reminders of the past, shaping the collective identity of the community (Halbwachs 1976).

Over the past two decades, Syriac communities have witnessed an assault on their ancient churches and monasteries in the town of Baritle. Each act of destruction inflicted a severe blow to the dwindling community's group identity and collective memory. In Iraq, churches and monasteries are central to the identity of Iraqi Christians, serving as sanctuaries where Christianity has thrived for centuries. During periods of persecution and wars, the church has been a refuge where a displaced community can congregate to preserve its identity. In this study, we examine how religious and historical contexts contribute to the preservation and continuity of Syriac and Chaldean identities. Specifically, our investigation centres on two ancient and historically significant sites: the monastery of Mar Behnam, (Figures 5.7; 5.8; 5.9) and the Monastery of Rabban Hormizd, (Figures 5.18; 5.19). These sites have been subject to devastation for centuries in various ways. Alqosh, for example, was recorded by A.H. Layard in 1849 as 'a very considerable Christian village' (1849: 233) and yet over 150 years later it is much diminished.

Recently the impact on tangible (physical) elements has been measured using archaeological techniques as those by by Novácek et al. (2021) who compared satellite images and photographs of monuments in Mosul from before and after the ISIS occupation. Recording damage to buildings highlights the impact of deliberate, targeted destruction on communities. In this chapter we provide new insights into the impact of devastation on the communities and landscapes in which they dwell since the recent period of persecution under ISIS.

While architecture acts as a significant agent within communities – and damage to architecture can be very revealing – it offers rather an imperfect proxy to record much of what has happened in the Mosul region over the past decade and earlier. In contrast to continuity and change in architecture, societal 'resilience' at Alqosh is demonstrated also in many other less tangible ways, some of which involve the re-arranging and re-accommodating of social structures and identities both shared and individual. Others involve the active maintenance of traditions: such as, for example, walking to important places in the landscape for communal picnicking as well as maintaining festival celebrations.

Baritle is home to three monasteries and six churches. The monasteries are known as Dayro d-Mar Theodoros (Saint Theodoros Monastery), Dayro d-Arbi Sathi (Monastery of the Forty Martyrs), and Dayro d-Mar Youhanna brd-Nagare (the Monastery of Saint John son of the carpenters). These monastic institutions have faced destruction due to repeated invasions and assaults throughout history, with the most recent attack by ISIS in 2014. However, following Baritle's liberation from ISIS in 2016, the local Orthodox Syriac churches undertook the reconstruction of damaged churches and monasteries.

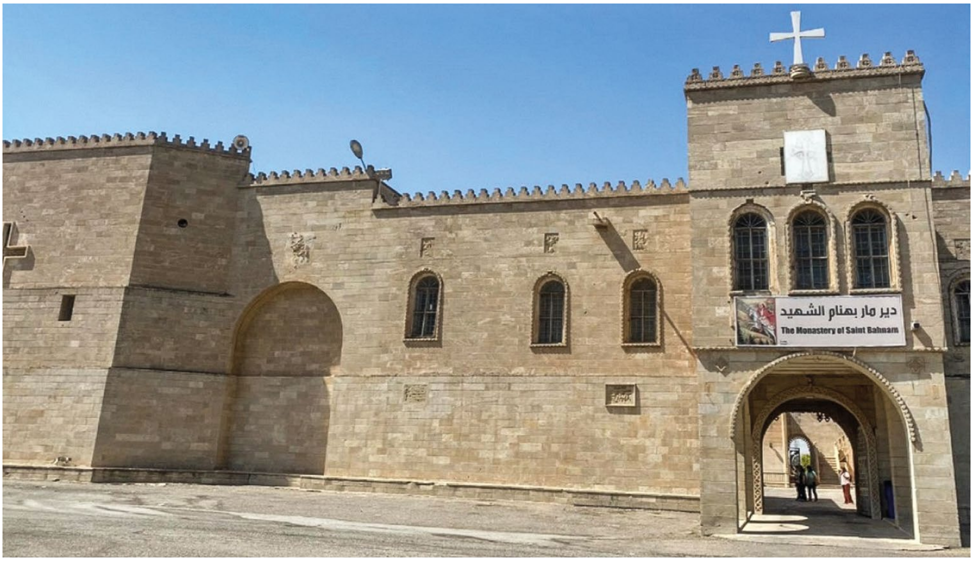
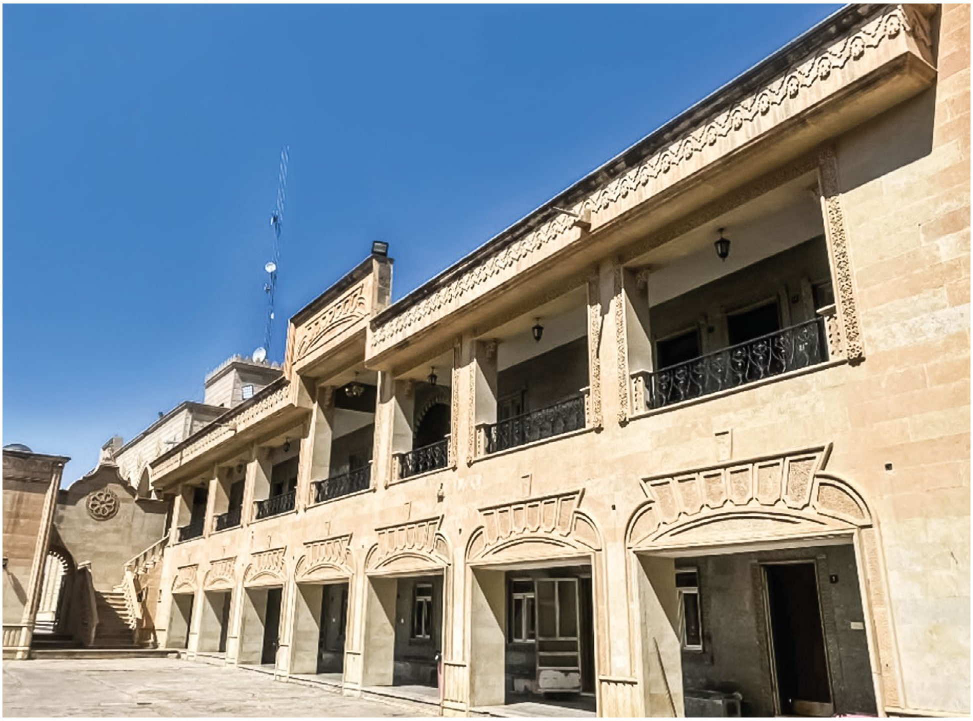


Fig 5.7 Showing exterior view of the Monastery of Mar Behnam. 2024



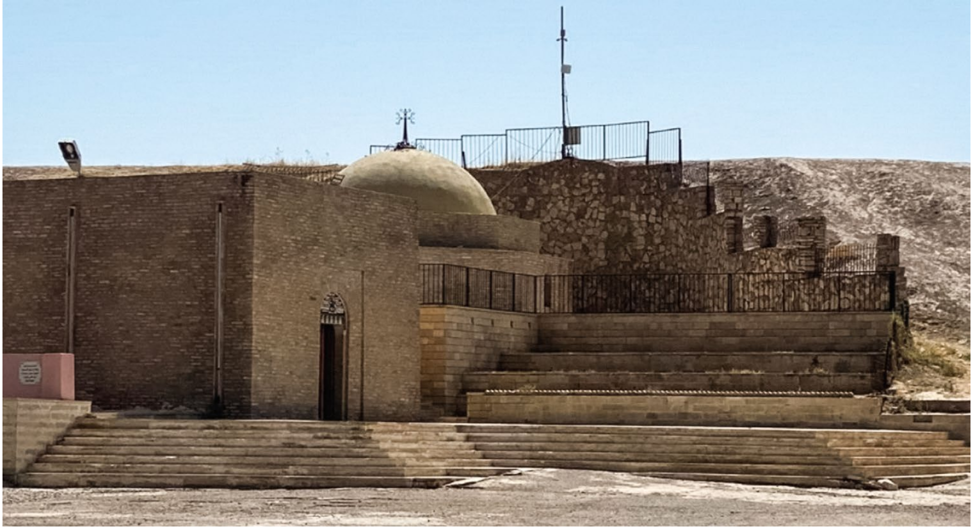
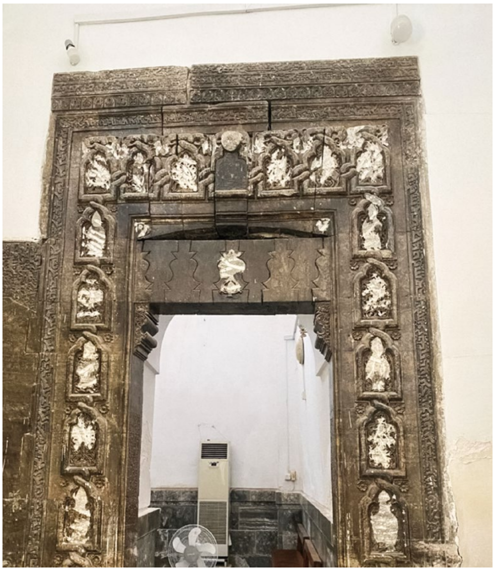


Fig 5.8 (Top) The back courtyard of the Monastery of Mar Behnam. 2024
Fig 5.9 (Bottom) The dome of Mar Behnam Monastery from the back courtyard, 2024

Furthermore, they play a significant role in reinforcing religious and cultural identity. They provide a sense of continuity and belonging, thereby strengthening the bond between individuals and their community (Nora 1989). For Iraqi Chaldeans and Syriacs, ancient places are not merely symbols of their past, but also markers of their identity reflecting the community's shared values, beliefs, and traditions. For example, the Mar Behnam monastery, a significant historical and religious 4th-century landmark in Mosul in Northern Iraq, has undergone several attacks and restorations over the years, most recently after being destroyed by the extremist group ISIS in 2015. In 2015, ISIS carried out a bombing attack that aimed at specific sections of the monastery. Additionally, they intentionally caused damage to the interior of the monastery, as shown in a comparison between archival and recent images (Figures 5.10; 5.11; 5.12, 5.13, 5.14, 5.15, 5.16). These images depict the removal of Christian iconography and other decorative elements.



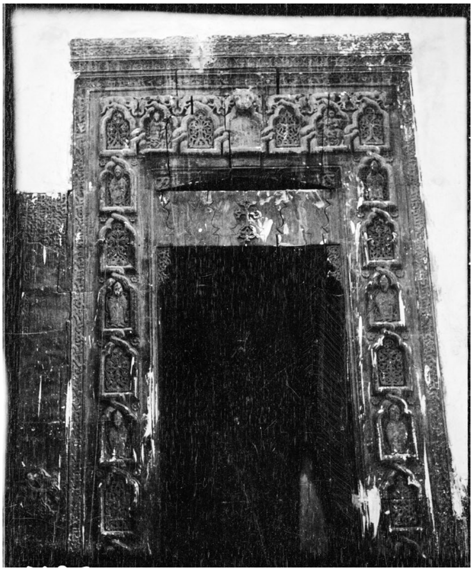
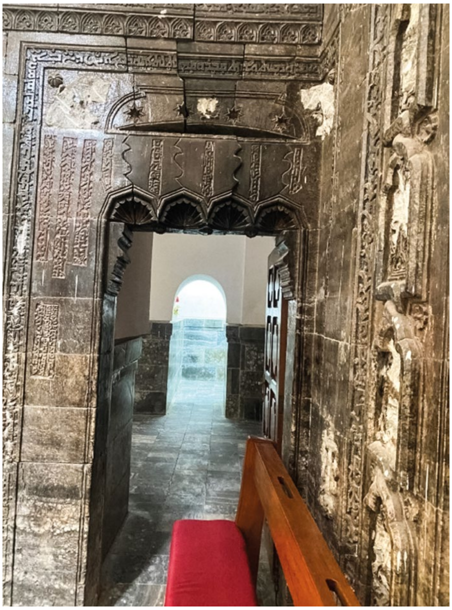


Fig 5.10 (Left) Monastery of Mar Behnam. Door into Se Chapel, 2024. Evidence of recent intentional damage done to the decorative features and Christian iconography on the stonework of the monastery.

Fig 5.11 (Right) Monastery of Mar Behnam showing door into Se Chapel - on lintel a cross, round door, small niches formed by an interlacing rope, the niches filled alternately with a saint and a decorated cross, May 1909. Image code (GB/3/1/13/1/20) @ Gertrude Bell archive, Newcastle University.



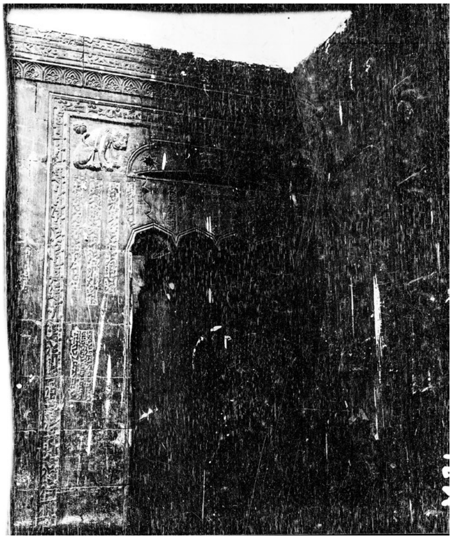
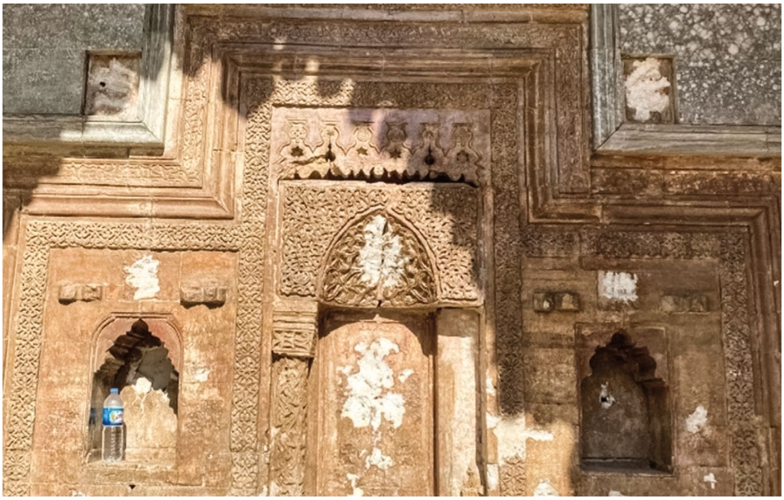


Fig 5.12 (Top) Monastery of Mar Behnam; carved decorated lintel and jambs around doorway. 2024. Evidence of recent intentional damage done to the decorative features and Christian iconography on the stonework of the monastery.

Fig 5.13 (Bottom) Monastery of Mar Behnam. Carved Decorated Lintel and Jambs Around Doorway May 1909. Image code (GB/3/1/13/1/21) @ Gertrude Bell archive, Newcastle University.



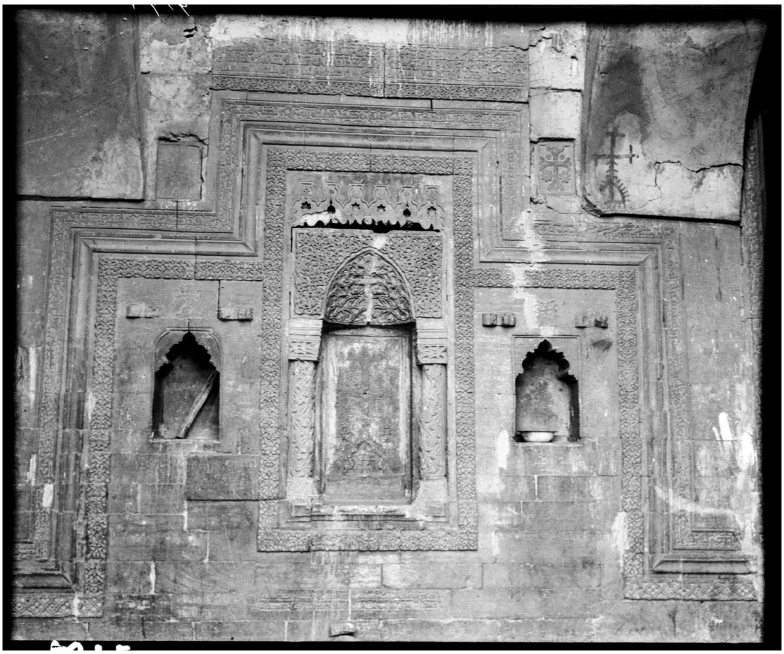
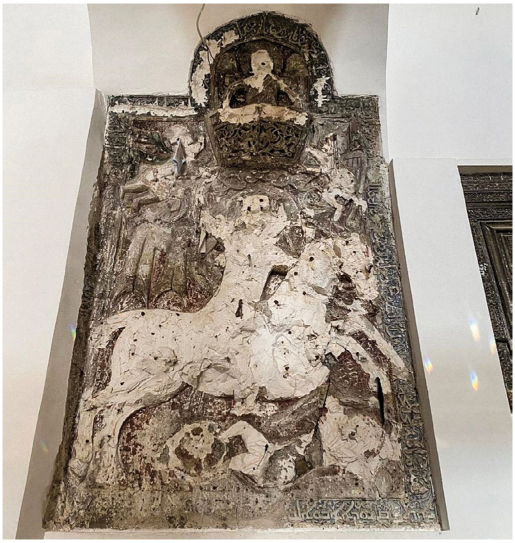


Fig 5.14 (Top) Monastery of Mar Behnam; niche flanked by two smaller niches in exterior wall. 2024. Evidence of recent intentional damage done to the decorative features and Christian iconography on the stonework of the monastery.

Fig 5.15 (Bottom) Monastery of Mar Behnam; niche flanked by two smaller niches in exterior wall. May 1909. Image code (GB/3/1/13/1/15) @ Gertrude Bell archive, Newcastle University.



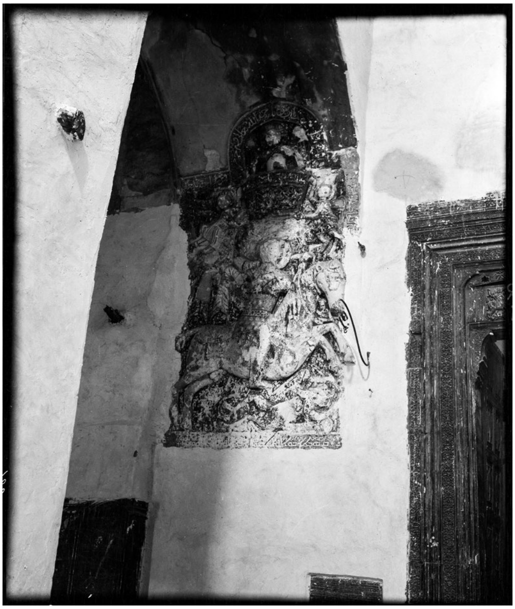


Fig 5.16 (Top) Monastery of Mar Behnam. 2024. Evidence of recent intentional damage done to the stucco plaque of St George and horse, on Nave Pier.

Fig 5.17 (Bottom) Monastery of Mar Behnam; Stucco Plaque of St George and horse, on Nave Pier. Image code (GB/3/1/13/1/19) @ Gertrude Bell archive, Newcastle University.

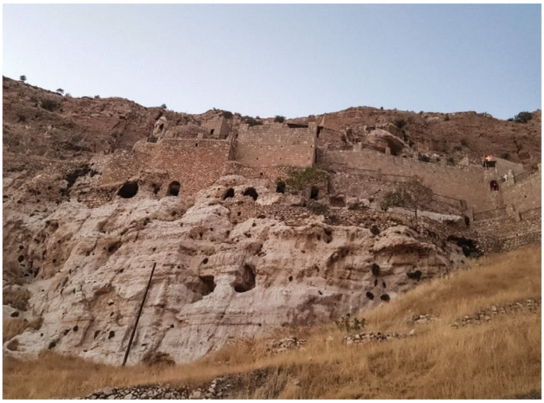
This monastery has been a beacon of faith and a symbol of resilience for the Syriac community, with its history imbued with the collective memory and identity of this community. It stands as a testament to the resilience of the Iraqi Syriac community during the ISIS occupation. This monastery encapsulates the collective memory of the community, preserving stories of survival, resilience, and faith in the face of adversity.

The second example is the Rabban Hormizd Monastery (Figures 5.18; 5.19) which is nestled in the mountains of Alqosh, Iraq, and holds a profound significance for the collective memory and identity of Iraqi Christian Chaldeans. Founded around 640 CE by the monk Rabban Hormizd, a most important figure in Syriac monastic history.

Harrak (2003: 1) describes the location of the monastery as being like 'an eagle's nest' atop the Alqosh Mountain and dominating the landscape all around. Leading to the cell shrine of Rabban Hormizd are nine ancient patriarchal grave slabs which Harrak refers to as 'masterpieces' inscribed with lengthy Syriac inscriptions in distinctive Estrangelo calligraphy (Harrak 2003). This ancient monastery has served as a spiritual sanctuary and a symbol of resilience for the Chaldean community in Iraq. Despite being subjected to vandalism, neglect and physical attacks by several hostile groups, the monastery retains deep historical and cultural significance to Iraqi Chaldeans and the historical continuity of the monastery has cemented its place in their collective memory. The monastery's physical location, carved out in the mountains about 2 miles from Alqosh and 28 miles north of Mosul, has also shaped the relationship between the Chaldean community and the landscape. The remote, mountainous setting has provided both a refuge and a symbol of steadfastness in the face of numerous invasions and upheavals. Moreover, the monastery has been a site of pilgrimage, prayer, and contemplation for centuries, reinforcing its spiritual significance for Iraqi Chaldeans and Syriacs.

Despite the decline in the Chaldean and Syriac population in Iraq, and specifically in Alqosh where the population now amounts to approximately 3750 individuals, the monastery continues to be both a beacon of faith and a physical testament to the community's increasingly tenuous yet enduring presence in the region. The memorial of Rabban Hormizd is considered one of the most important social, heritage and religious occasions in Alqosh, which is called 'Shira'. The Christians from neighbouring areas and Alqosh people gather in the valley and the green lands near the Monastery of Rabban Hormizd to celebrate the memorial of the founder of the monastery annually for a two day period which occurs two weeks after Easter. The celebration includes a full day trip with special religious heritage and daily social activities. In addition, immigrants from Alqosh in many countries attend this celebration due to its cultural and social importance. One of the authors recounted how she used to visit the monastery in the summer with the youth group of her church which would organise trips to these religious sites, where they learned about the saints and the history of the monasteries. They would also visit the monastery for its annual celebration when

Christians in the Nineveh Plain would honour the memory of Mar Hormizd on the second Sunday after Easter. The occasion includes prayer ceremonies, a pilgrimage procession to the monastery and traditional music and dance.



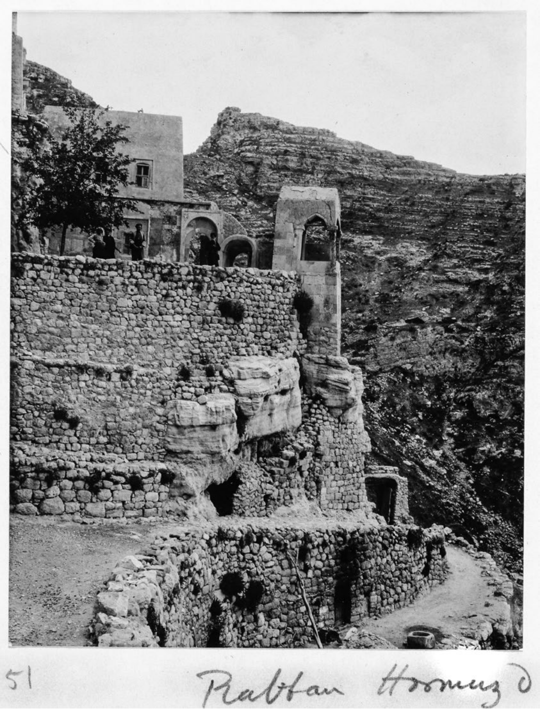


Fig 5.18 (Top) Exterior image of Rabban Hormizd monastery in Iraq 2024.
Fig 5.19 (Bottom) Rabban Hormiz monastery Iraq-May 1909, image code (GB/3/1/13/1/51) @ Gertrude Bell archive, Newcastle University.

The importance of these landscapes for Syriac and Chaldeans is closely connected to their historical, religious, and cultural aspects. Within these landscapes lie layers of meanings that echo collective memory, constantly shaping and reshaping it. As events unfold in these spaces, their significance also evolves, ultimately reinforcing the cultural identity of the community.

Conclusion

The landscape, in its role as a source of collective memory and identity, provides a lens through which we can understand the intricate relationship between a community and its environment. This relationship is particularly discernible in the context of the Iraqi Syriacs and Chaldeans, whose identity and collective memory are deeply rooted in their landscape.

As we discussed in this article, the preservation of collective memory and identity within the landscape can be attributed to several factors. Primarily, the landscape itself functions as a physical record for the Iraqi Chaldean and Syriac communities. Earlier, the concept of landscapes as 'evolving narratives' was referred to (Tuan 2012; Jackson 1985). This is manifested in practices such as carving the community's endangered language onto the landscape, as exemplified by Alqosh mountain, and engraving the walls of caves within the ancient monastery of Rabban Hormizd with scripts from the Bible in the Aramaic language.

Furthermore, the landscape serves as a cultural crucible for the collective memory of the communities, represented by religious and historical structures; the 'anchored sites' as Nora (1989) terms them, which physically symbolise the community's moments of triumph, loss, survival, and continuity throughout its history. Rabban Hormizd Monastery, the churches and structures of Baritle and Mar Behnam, despite enduring repeated attacks and damage, have endured as symbols of faith, resilience, and sacrifice inherently connected to the emotional, spiritual and cultural conscience of the Chaldean and Syriac communities. As Schama confirms, 'All our landscapes… are imprinted with our tenacious, inescapable obsessions' (1995: 18).

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to thank the reviewers for their insightful feedback on an earlier draft of this chapter. We also extend our thanks to the Iraqi Syriac and Chaldean communities for their support and for providing recent images from Baritle, Mar Behnam and Alqosh, as well as material on their artistic heritage. Special thanks are due to Matti Al-Saka, Aveen M. Hanna and Putros Qasha, a sculptor and Aramaic calligrapher.

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Biographies

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Re-made Landscape

6. A 'Nimrod's Paradise' or 'Man-made Desert'? The Devastation of Scotland's Uplands: Drivers, Responses and Resilience, c. 1800 to the Present

Annie Tindley

Keywords Sutherland; Ecology; Community; Clearances; Re-wilding; Devastation; Resilience

Abstract Scotland found itself at the heart of Europe's Romantic movement in the early nineteenth century, a trend driven by environmental and cultural changes, which has been surprisingly durable. At the same time, radical processes of agricultural and landscape change, rooted in powerful legal privileges held by landowners, led to a wholesale increase of sheep and deer and to the devastation of both the environment and traditional communities and their way of life, especially starkly in the Gàidhealtachd. As it became a global hotspot for commercial sport amongst a global plutocratic elite, the resulting devastation imposed on the landscape (described by Frank Fraser Darling as a 'man-made desert' by the 1950s) is only recently being better understood. New approaches are being instituted to reverse that damage, such as rewilding, that are themselves controversial and subject to criticism for being undemocratic and ignoring the expertise and needs of local communities once again. This chapter will consider the motivations behind and responses to those changes from landscape, ecological and community perspectives, and understand the role of resistance and protest embedded within those processes. It will also draw conclusions as to how resilience and adaptation in the historical context can underpin future thinking around land use, community empowerment and democratisation of decision-making in the context of a climate crisis.

Annie Tindley: A 'Nimrod's Paradise' or 'Man-made Desert'? The Devastation of Scotland's Uplands: Drivers, Responses and Resilience, c. 1800 to the Present. In: Lekakis, S. et al. (eds.), Towards an Archaeology of Devastation: Breaking/Replacing the People-Place Connection in Landscape. Heidelberg: heiBOOKS 2026, p. 115–139, DOI: https://doi.org/10.11588/heibooks.1613.c24603.

Introduction

> *'But the view from the Corryarrick was neither great, beautiful, nor picturesque. On the south it looked into the wild black region of Badenoch'. (Leyden 1903)*
>
> *'My view was that the original Highlands were in effect a balanced complex organism ... [but] the Highlands had become a devastated terrain which political and administrative acts could not restore without biological understanding'. (Fraser Darling and Morton Boyd 1964: 295–6; Brokaw 2004: 1-15)*
>
> *'Imagine a Scotland where nature is reawakened. Where a rich tapestry of native woodlands, wetlands, wildflower meadows and grasslands is stitched back together. Where land and seas teem with life. Where people feel connected to the natural world, wherever they live. And where nature-based enterprises support thriving communities far and wide. Imagine Scotland as the world's first Rewilding Nation. Will you help us lead the way?'*[1]

Landscapes were experienced and understood as much as cultural constructs as physical spaces, carrying their own historical baggage and assumed meanings (See for example, Burchardt 2023; Lorimer 2013; Harman 2009; Fraser 2017: 155–175; Smout 2000). One landscape which seems to strongly embody this are the uplands of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, which from the early nineteenth century became a globally recognisable and highly desirable Romantic landscape (Andrews 1989; Drurie 2003; Hunter 2014). This was driven not by economic change but by cultural trends which have been surprisingly durable. After the tumult and suffering of the last Jacobite Rising in 1745–6 and its brutal aftermath, the focus turned to the application of Enlightenment thinking and Improvement – of landscape and people – and the Highlands and Islands became one of the cockpits of Europe's Enlightenment, attracting improvers, philosophers and curious tourists, the start of what would be a rising flood which continues to this day (Jonsson 2013). Visitors were inspired by the novels of Sir Walter Scott, the mystery of James Macpherson's *Ossianic* poems and later, the draw of field sports such as stalking, grouse shooting and fishing (Fenyo 2000; Taylor 2016: 4, 61–4, 196–7; Cameron 2007: 218–48). From the mid-twentieth century, scientists, campaigners and some politicians began to argue that these processes had had a devastating impact on the environment and communities of the region – its ecologies, languages and culture – and it is this devastation and responses to it that this chapter explores (Brokaw 2004: 6–7).

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[1] Quote cited from The Scottish Rewilding Alliance: https://www.rewild.scot/ [last accessed 9.7.24].

This devastation was a slower process than that wrecked by conflict, disease or natural disaster, and its impacts have been cumulative and iterative.[2] Indeed, the pace of devastation explains to a large degree the relative lack of active protest against its environmental and human costs, alongside dominant intellectual rationales which ensured that any protest was effectively quashed before the later part of the nineteenth century (Fraser Darling 1955: 296). Devastation is partial, and in the long nineteenth century Highland context, framed as improvement: it is the varied and at times contradictory social bases of how devastation was and is understood that also explains the acrimonious contemporary legacies of landscape management and the cultural and economic assumptions underpinning those in upland Scotland today. Polarisation across public debate is the dominant result, whether the immediate issue is deer management or forestry or – most controversially – rewilding, all sitting uneasily under the umbrella of the land reform and community empowerment legislative programme introduced by the Scottish Parliament from 2003.

Although focused on land use, ownership and management, the politics of the Highland Problem were also rooted in narratives of declinism and decay, the notion that where there was now poverty, ugliness and ecological decimation there was once abundance, comfort and beauty.[3] As a region, the Highlands are not alone in this negative conceptualisation and some framings of the rural histories of England, Wales and Ireland also have devastations at their heart, in the forms of enclosure, famine and colonialism (Bake et al. 2023: 48–9, 56; Griffin 2023: 96–7, 101–103; McDonagh and Daniels 2012: 110, 115;.Nixon 2011: 35). These processes can also be framed by Rob Nixon's 'slow violence' thesis: the kind of devastation that occurs 'gradually and out of sight' and is both incremental and accretive. In the case of the Highlands, this violence was both ecological and social (Nixon 2011: 2-6). Nixon also points to the context of slow violence by framing it as an official landscape, driven by short termism and extractive thinking, superimposed onto a vernacular, affective landscape thought about it long term ways, creating 'refugees in place and time' (Nixon 2011:

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[2] See the classic text: (Hunter 2012: 115).

[3] Never more so than by Frank Fraser Darling, who's conception of the particular kinds of devastation wrought are still highly influential today. (Brokaw 2004: 7; See also, Robertson 2015: 993–5, 1004; Griffin 2023: 108, 112).

17-19). The Highlands and Islands of Scotland are a large and varied land and maritime region with specific local histories, cultures and ecologies. Generalisations can be drawn across the region; however, for the purposes of this chapter, a case study has been selected to enable some specificity across a relatively long chronological period of devastation. This is the far northern mainland area of Sutherland, which until 1919 was owned almost in its entirety (of approximately one million acres) by one aristocratic family, the Leveson-Gowers, earls and dukes of Sutherland (Richards 1973: 3–18; Tindley 2010: 1–13). The Sutherland family had a long presence in the county as clan chiefs, and relatively impoverished ones at that, but that was transformed in the 1780s when the countess of Sutherland married Lord Stafford, a wealthy English landowner in his own right and heir to the Bridgewater fortune (Richards 1973: 5-10). The family were catapulted from relatively unknown regional landowners to one of the richest patrician families in Britain and the largest landowners in western Europe. They had their lands on the levers of power and wealth and used those levers to institute a revolution on their northern estates: the introduction of commercial sheep farming in place of traditional subsistence agriculture and the wholesale movement of their tenantry to accommodate it. Later in the century, as the bottom fell out of the global market for sheep products, these sheep runs were converted into sporting lets attracting the new and growing global plutocracy and instituting new economic and environmental monocultures which are still very present today (Wheeler 1966).

This chapter will consider the motivations for and responses to these devastating changes from landscape, ecological and community perspectives, to understand the role of resistance and protest embedded within those processes. Part of this links to the other key argument made: that against this contested background, we can draw some understanding as to how resilience and adaptation in the historical context worked to underpin future thinking around land use, community empowerment and democratisation of decision-making in the context of a global climate crisis.

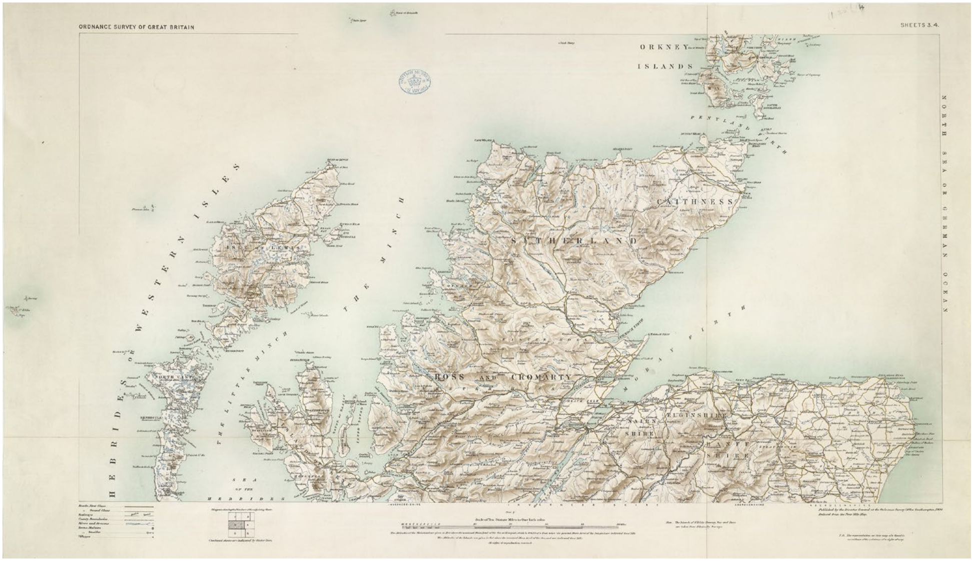
ORDNANCE SURVEY OF GREAT BRITAIN
SHEETS 3.4.
ORKNEY ISLANDS
PENTLAND FIRTH
CAITHNESS
SUTHERLAND
ROSS AND CROMARTY
NAIRN SHIRE
ELGIN SHIRE
BANFF SHIRE
THE MINCH
THE LITTLE MINCH
WESTERN ISLES
HEBRIDES
SEA OF THE HEBRIDES
MORAY FIRTH
NORTH SEA OR GERMAN OCEAN

Fig 6.1 Map of Sutherland, 1868. With thanks to the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland: https://maps.nls.uk/. Re-use: Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) licence.

I: c.1800-1870: the Highland Clearances & their aftermath

Sutherland exhibited a mainly 'desolate' landscape of mountain, moorland, lochs and peat bogs. Sheep rearing was the staple business, having been reinforced by the notorious policy pursued in the early nineteenth century by the principal landowner, Elizabeth, countess of Sutherland, and her husband, George Leveson Gower, 2nd marquess of Stafford, of removing the crofters to the coasts. It was stated in 1831 that 180,000 fleeces and 40,000 animals for meat were being exported annually. Arable farming was chiefly confined to a 'narrow strip along the south-east coast, scarcely two miles in breadth', where 'heavy crops of turnips' were grown along with wheat, oats and barley (Jenkins 2009).

The Sutherland Clearances, part of the wider Highland Clearances, have long been characterised as Scotland's modern tragedy (For an overview of the historiography see Tindley 2021: 181–194). They have been framed primarily as a social and cultural disaster, as tens of thousands of small tenants were forcibly cleared from their small farms or crofts in the glens and interior of the region, to the coastlines, where they were given poor land to support some subsistence agriculture and convert to fishing as their chief source of income. The human costs were immediately recognised by contemporaries, and the controversies have and continue to regularly flare up in Scottish political and cultural life (Richards 2008: xi–xxii). The environmental and ecological consequences have taken longer to recognise, but began to be highlighted by the mid-twentieth century and are now at the centre of political debates around land and decision-making in Scotland today (Brokaw 2004: 40).

The Sutherland Clearances were particularly notorious due to the speed and thoroughness by which they were carried out.[4] They began in earnest in 1809 and ended around 1821: a twelve-year period where approximately 20,000 people were evicted and relocated systematically, whereas most other Clearances took place over a longer period and in a more piecemeal fashion. They were also carried out in some cases with striking brutality and swiftness: legal powers for landowners in Scotland were amongst the most extensive in Britain, and they only had to give forty days' notice before eviction. Many of those evictions were carried out violently, with gangs of estate employees driving people out of their homes before setting fire to them, to prevent them being reoccupied. These 'burnings', as they would become known, became emblematic of the social tragedy of the Clearances, the impact of which rolled on over decades (Hunter 2015). Many of the evicted people could not make a living on their new coastal plots and building on a pre-existing pattern, the trickle of emigration from the region became a steady flow until the late twentieth century.

There was therefore an immediate community and cultural devastation enacted: loss of people, a traditional way of life, and cultural specificities such as the Gaelic language. It was a body blow to community cohesion and confidence, particularly as the robust protests made against the clearance policy were effectively defeated (Mackinnon 2019: 71–102). And protest there was, serious enough to bring the militia and armed forces into the region. The violence evident in some clearances was striking: during one fraught eviction in Kildonan in 1814, people were violently removed from their houses which were then burned. One woman in her nineties was left in one of the houses by accident: she was saved from immediate danger but died a few days later. The episode was serious enough to bring the factor (land manager) and Sutherland Estate tenant, Patrick Sellar, to trial for culpable homicide in Inverness in 1816. He was acquitted – to no one's great surprise – but the reputational damage hung over him and his employers permanently (See the definitive account: Richards 1999).

There were other devastating effects which took longer to fully materialise. These were the environmental and ecological impacts that a shift from a traditionally mixed agricultural economy of small black cattle and small-scale arable operations to a monoculture of new improved sheep breeds. The full weight of the economic and scientific resources of the estate were thrown into supporting this monoculture, moving away from traditional transhumance patterns of lowland grazings during the winters and upland grazings in the shielings in the summer to year-round grazing on enormous sheep 'walks' (Melness sheep farm in the north of Sutherland, for example, occupied over 80,000 acres) supplemented by imported feed for the winter months (Clarke 2014). Although it was a high-input and capital intensive form of farming, for a few decades at least, the profits were enormous, with the largest sheep farms capturing rents of upwards of £2000 per year for the estate (Tindley 2010: 114–37). The legacy of palatial farm houses and the elevation of some farmers into the ranks of the gentry demonstrate the initial success of the new industry. It was, however, a fragile extractive model: the environment soon began to suffer, with grass and soil health and productivity deteriorating year on year, generating a commensurate rise in feeding costs. The levels of ecological management required to maintain such a specialised and fragile eco-system were staggering and eroded profits. The estates papers are replete with regular demands from the sheep farming tenants for rent reductions in light of these environmental challenges, but worse was to come by the 1860s when the bottom fell out of the global market for sheep products and competition from New Zealand and North America really began to bite (Tindley 2009: 307–11).

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[4] This notoriety has led to a plethora of published studies: the most recent is: Hunter (2015; see also Tindley 2021).

The Sutherland Clearances, like those enacted across the Highlands and Islands, were part of an economic and intellectual package with its roots in the Enlightenment and its focus on rationality and improvement. These ideas were used to justify an economic and environmental revolution on the Sutherland estates, the justification being that sheep was the product the land could support and still contribute to the national and imperial economy.[5] The impact on the communities and environment of Sutherland was drastic and almost entirely negative, the beginning of a process that would result in Fraser Darling's diagnosis of a 'man-made desert' in the 1950s.[6] It was also a fundamentally de-peopled landscape: all Clearances achieved this but those in Sutherland were and remain more striking than most, with almost no settlements to this day existing in the inland areas. It would be this de-populated, silent landscape which would become emblematic of the nineteenth century Romantic craze for the Highlands and Islands.[7]

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[5] See the classic apologia: Loch 1820; Richards 1979; Richards 1972 19–36.

[6] F. Fraser Darling, Pelican in the wilderness: a naturalist's odyssey in North America (London, 1956): 353.

[7] P. Womack, *Improvement and Romance: Constructing the myth of the Highlands* (Basingstoke, 1989); C. W. J. Withers, 'Give us Land and Plenty of it': the Ideological basis to Land and Landscape in the Scottish Highlands,' *Landscape History,* 12 (1990).

II: 1870-1900: The shift to commercial sport, the Sutherland Reclamations & the Highland Land War

One of the great ironies of the Sutherland Clearances was that the peak of the new industry they were enacted to support – sheep farming – was only a few decades long, although large scale sheep farming did continue to a much less profitable extent into the 1930s. This was not due to any lack of commitment or further investment on the part of the estate. By the late 1860s, when the global markets for sheep products were looking distinctly shaky, the 3rd Duke and his managers launched an ambitious scheme of land reclamation at three sites across the county, investing more than £200,000 over twelve years and drawing on the latest steam technology in their attempt to literally create quality arable land from the 'wastes' and bogs of Sutherland (Tindley 2009: 303–4; Alison 1850). This land was to be added to the established sheep farms, so that their tenants could grow cheaply the winter food the flocks required to survive, without the need to import much more expensive food from over the county borders. The Sutherland reclamations were the largest land reclamation scheme attempted in nineteenth century Britain, by both acreage and cost: much of the expense was sunk into steam plough sets from John Fowler & Co., Leeds and it was this revolutionary new environmental technology in which the estate's hopes were placed (Tindley and Wodehouse 2014: 206–8).

This was part of a wider Victorian confidence in their scientific and technological abilities to overcome what had been seen as insurmountable environmental challenges. In the case of Sutherland, these included poor, peaty and acidic soils which the improvers of the early nineteenth century had identified as the reason why the county had the fewest cultivated acres in Scotland, and had been a primary driver to establish commercial sheep farming (Winter 2002). There were other drivers too, not least the imperial. The architect of the Sutherland Clearances, the most senior manager for the dukes of Sutherland from 1812 to 1855, James Loch, developed the plan to enable Sutherland to contribute to the growing imperial economy, exporting wool and sheep products from the new commercial sheep farms, and barrelled herring from the new coastal settlements, which was sent as its primary market to West Indian slave plantations (Loch 1820: 123-7). The land reclamation technologies the estate enthusiastically bought into in the 1870s also had a strong imperial pedigree. Although designed with British and Irish agricultural conditions in mind, the steam plough became a global imperial success for John Fowler & Co., exported across the British empire. Indeed, the 3rd Duke saw his first steam plough in action at a demonstration on the banks of the Nile in Egypt (MacKenzie 1997). Such was the confidence of the Duke and his employees – at least initially – that a technology had been developed which would

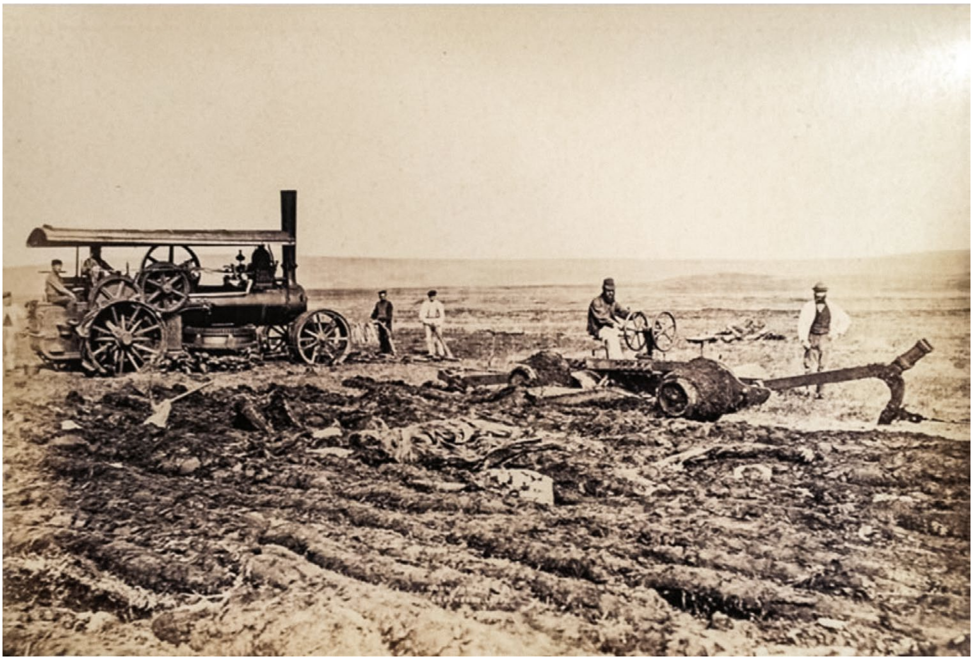

Fig 6.2 Steam ploughing in Sutherland. The 3rd Duke of Sutherland is the gentleman on the plough. Museum of English Rural Life, TR FOW, PH2/33-42 C Series Cultivating Machinery.

fundamentally alter the upland environment of Sutherland and make it 'productive', the estate eventually purchased eight ploughing sets at a cost of £1000 each, and made additional design alterations to adapt it to conditions there.

In spite of this initial rush of confidence, the overall ecological and landscape impact of the steam ploughs was limited. They were enormously resource-intensive, requiring large teams of labourers to supply water and coal and complete the complex drainage operations each of the newly created arable fields required. There was plenty of contemporary criticism of the scheme, principally on the grounds that it was financially ruinous and therefore unsustainable and certainly not replicable for those without ducal incomes. It was also criticised for the short-lived nature of its environmental impact. The reclamations petered out in the mid-1880s, and by 1893, when a Royal Commission on land use in the Highlands and Islands was investigating, only 757 from a total reclaimed acreage of 3471 were still under cultivation (The National Library of Scotland 1893). This was a shocking result after the volume of investment and was compared unfavourably with the back-breaking land reclamation that the small tenant communities had undertaken when they were removed by the Clearances decades before, using only their own labour and the *cas croom*, or foot plough. They had been given some of the poorest land available, rocky coastal plots, where in some cases, they had been obliged to carry soil from other areas to their plots to have something to work with. Indeed, the Royal Commission found that the small plots of reclaimed land that had been granted to crofters made up the majority of the acreage still in cultivation ten years later (PP 1884 XXXII–XXXVI; Tindley 2009: 316-8).

Despite their overall failure, there are still markers in the landscape as to where the reclamations took place: at Ribigill near Tongue and Clashmore in Assynt, the large improved fields of the newly created farms are still in evidence, although only Ribigill remains a single working farm, Clashmore having been divided up amongst the local crofters in 1909 by the Congested Districts Board, the government agency established in 1896 and tasked with land reform and economic development in the Highlands and Islands (Tindley 2010: 55–7). The main site of the reclamations, on the banks of Loch Shin near Lairg, was overtaken in the 1950s by a hydro power scheme which raised the depth of the loch and put most of the reclaimed land under water. The Sutherland estate had long before written off the reclamations as an expensive mistake, but one which had been rectified by the explosion in demand for commercial sport (Tindley 2010: 114-137).

The potential for the Scottish Highlands and Islands generally to become a sporting paradise was evident from as early as the 1830s, when pioneering estates, such as that of the Ellices of Invergarry, demonstrated how wildly popular the region was in the eyes of a growing plutocratic elite for leisure and the high rents that could be garnered from letting out sporting leases to them. There were a number of factors contributing to this growing popularity. The most important was cultural: the novels and poetry of Sir Walter Scott, the Ossianic poetry of James Macpherson and the royal family's trend-setting purchase of the Balmoral Estate in 1852 (Lorimer 2000; Tindley and Haynes 2014: 35–50). The decades of the mid-nineteenth century saw the consolidation and dominance of the association of the region with sport – deer stalking, grouse shooting, fishing – for firstly a British and then an increasingly global plutocratic and aristocratic elite. Landed estates began to pivot away from economic planning around commercial sheep farming, fishing or kelp towards this lucrative new market of sportsmen searching for annual lets to take for the summer months, facilitated by new railway lines on the mainland and a ferry network for the islands (Tindley 2010: 119-120). Sheep farms which had been supplied with substantial houses and outbuildings were re-purposed for this new market and environmental management re-orientated to support game birds, animals and fish. New professional expertise – river bailiffs, hatchery managers, ghillies, game keepers – grew and overshadowed shepherding and fishing as dominant employment prospects (Orr 1982). This economic and cultural shift had major and continuing impacts on both the environment and the local communities of the region. In environmental terms, the shift to commercial sport in practice meant swapping one monoculture for another, and a growing professionalisation to support it. Rivers were re-shaped and species managed; landscape-scale management practices put in place to support grouse breeding cycles and deer management. One of the major casualties were woodlands and trees, highly vulnerable to deer (Tindley and Haynes 2014: 86–98; Mallock 1914; Russel 1857). Much of the region looks as it does today due to its long-term management for commercial sport, still a dominant industry today (Smout 1991; Cameron 1994).

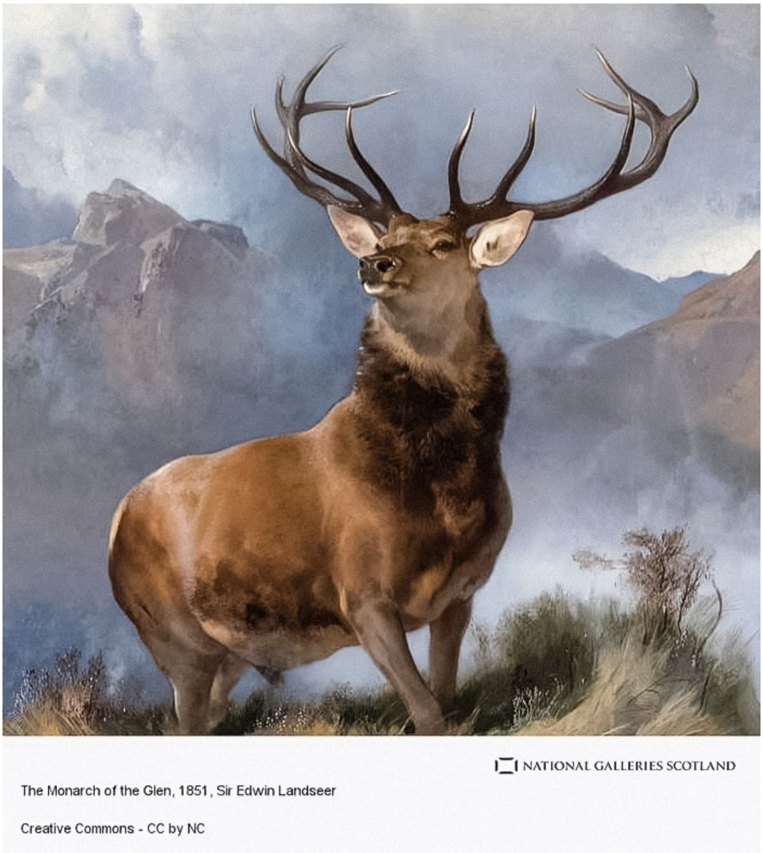
NATIONAL GALLERIES SCOTLAND
The Monarch of the Glen, 1851, Sir Edwin Landseer
Creative Commons - CC by NC

Fig 6.3 Sir Edwin Landseer, *The Monarch of the Glen* (1851). The National Gallery of Scotland, Creative Commons CC BY-NC.

The community impacts of this further ecological devastation were just as severe. The economic constraints faced by communities continued and, in some cases, worsened; poverty was endemic and depopulation accelerated, as tracked from the 1861 census onwards (Tindley 2011: 236–256). Highland communities were particularly vulnerable to the sharp economic downturns of the later nineteenth century and major weather events such as storms. It was a combination of these factors that triggered what would become the Highland Land War (c. 1879–1919), a major outbreak of agrarian protest that swept across the region, demanding greater rights over and to land (Robertson 2013; Mathieson 2000). The Land War is probably the most obvious symptom of the depth of community resilience and resistance to the changes being imposed on the Highlands and Islands in this period although its successes were limited. It did precipitate a number of land reform acts, starting with the Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Act of 1886, and the 1911 and 1919 Land Settlement (Scotland) Acts, which to a degree much more striking than in England, saw some of the traditional rights of landowners transferred to government and gave small tenants protection from eviction and rack renting (Cameron 1996: 191–2). It also resulted in another form of landscape remaking, in the form of government-led and funded land resettlement schemes, including in Sutherland, in places long since emptied of people (Bangor-Jones 2020: 100–122). Fundamentally, it did not lead to a wholesale change in the balance of landowning power in Scotland, and the land market remained dominated by a relatively small number of landowners holding often very substantial acreages. This pattern – despite a long tradition of legislative land reform – has persisted into the present, and Scotland has the most concentrated landownership patterns in Europe (See for example, Wightman 1997). Sutherland is a good exemplar of this pattern: the dukes of Sutherland owned almost the whole county by 1829, totally over 1.2 million acres and making it the largest landed estate in western Europe (Tindley 2010: 1-9). This pattern of concentration carries major implications for land use and management, issues which in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries crystallised around economic and employment issues but in the twenty first century have shifted towards the environmental and climate crises.

III: 1900–2000: Land sales, diversification – same old?

The early twentieth century saw turmoil in Highland land markets, as – along with those across Britain and Ireland – during and after World War One a wave of huge land sales as older aristocratic families began to divest and newer plutocratic elites took advantage to establish themselves as the owners rather than the tenants of shooting estates. This is brilliantly exemplified by Sutherland: the 4th Duke had undertaken major land sales in the 1890s, as the economic context for landed families darkened under new taxation regimes and declining agricultural markets. He sold approximately 100,000 acres of central northern Sutherland to a central belt dye manufacturer, but was vastly overtaken by his son, the 5th Duke, who in 1919–20 sold approximately 430,000 acres by auction in London through Knight, Frank & Rutley, broken into lots based around success shooting leases (National Library of Scotland 1900; 1919; Beckett and Turner 2007; Thompson 2007: 283). More often than not the sitting tenant would purchase outright what he had previously been renting, and the Sutherland family liquidated their land assets and transferred them into stocks and bonds. The sales continued at a much slower pace over the twentieth century until the family had whittled down to 100,000 acres their old empire of over 1 million acres, a portfolio they maintain today (5th Duke of Sutherland 1957: 70–1; Tindley 2010: 133–6; National Library of Scotland 1914a; The Times, 1914; National Library of Scotland 1914b; the auctioneers were Knight, Frank and Rutley who handled many of the great estate sales in the period; Cannadine 1990: 108–9).

Despite the revolutionary transfer of land in this period, the impact on land use was more limited, as buyers took the opportunity to own their own slice of the Romantic sporting Highlands. To take one example, we can look to the Reay Forest, a substantial sporting estate in west Sutherland, which was initially rented by the dukes of Westminster but was then purchased by them and is maintained up to the present as a mixed commercial sporting estate, run on traditional lines.[8] For local communities therefore, opportunities remained limited and depopulation continued to accelerate, with the 1920s and 1930s the worst affected decades. In some Sutherland parishes, population declined in absolute terms by forty per cent between the 1921 and 1931 censuses: the contemporary political and social commentary reflected this bleak outlook and warnings that Highland society was dead on its feet rang out (For an overview see Macdonald 2009: 11–33, 111–128). Darling popularised the idea of the Scottish uplands, especially the focus of his research, the Western Highlands as a 'devastated terrain' in the 1950s (Fraser Darlin 1955: 353). To his mind, this was truly a devastated society, and the devastation could be tracked across landscapes managed intensively for deer, salmon and grouse (Brokaw 2004: 40, 48, 54–7). As he concluded, 'the Highlands are a devastated countryside, and that is the plain primary reason why there are now few people and why there is a constant economic problem.' As Brokaw has convincingly argued, Darling's views were informed not only by the latest thinking in ecology but by a decided romanticism about the Highlands and its 'traditional' society and culture, informed by his envy of what he saw as its simple way of life when the rest of Britain was heavily urbanised and rural places increasingly dominated by mechanised large farming practices (Fraser Darling 1968: 192; Brokaw 2004: 65–6).

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[8] See summary of historic and current land management policy on the Reay Estate: https://www.grosvenor.com/rural-estates/reay-forest-estate-5ec3d8514b3a70369cbdf023beff4601 [last accessed 3.5.24].

The twentieth century saw new influences, principally a much more interventionist government which took a leading role in economic planning, particularly from the interwar period. Both urban and rural Scotland were struggling with high unemployment, industrial decline and often shocking living conditions and health outcomes (Cameron 1996: 153–69). The government, in an echo of the eighteenth century trend of imposing improvement through the introduction of new industries, addressed these issues via centralised economic planning, including an economic and industrial diversification plan for the Highlands and Islands built around transport infrastructure, tourism and energy, each bringing new impacts on both the environment and the communities (Cameron 1997: 195–216). New industries were brought to the region, heavily supported and subsidised by government, including – and most emblematically – a aluminium plant at Kinlochleven (Perchard 2012). Infrastructure improvements to roads, bridges and harbours also brought employment and people to the region, but this was all dwarfed by the impact of the evolving and extractive energy industry. This began with a strategic government investment into hydropower across the region: 'Power in the Glens' as it was dubbed. Enormous earth works were undertaken, glens flooded, new lochs created and mountains hollowed out to accommodate hydro projects, which generated electricity for the national grid, while fulfilling the 'social contract', which promised every house – even in the remotest glens – would be finally linked up to the grid (Macdonald 2009: 182–3; Miller 2002; Fraser Darling 1948).

The wider plan was that access to cheap electricity would enable improvements and modernisation in agriculture and tourist facilities such as B&Bs and hotel accommodation. Hydro would soon be overtaken by both nuclear energy initiatives and North Sea oil and gas. Just as with sheep farming, then commercial sport, these were extractive industries which provided an uptick in employment (although not

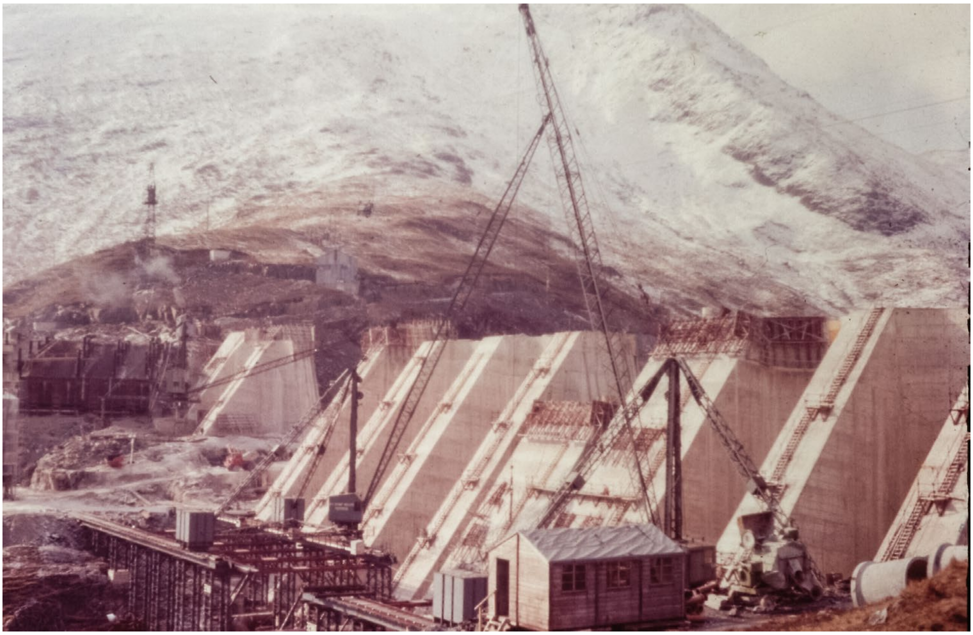

Fig 6.4 The Ben Cruachan Hydro plant under construction, c. 1964.
Drax Group https://www.drax.com/about-us/our-sites-and-businesses/cruachan-power-station/

in proportionally skilled jobs) but which also introduced new and large scale environmental changes, often detrimental. Major infrastructure and building hubs were created, mainly on coastal sites in the northeast, Orkney and Shetland and the pioneering Dounreay nuclear works were established on the north coast of Sutherland.[63]

Although an economic opportunity, there were many contemporaries who were highly critical of the new energy revolution in the Highlands and Islands, for cultural, social and environmental reasons. This was most famously captured in John McGrath's 1973 play, *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black Black Oil,* which protested against the devastation the introduction of capitalist models of extractive industry had had on the region across two hundred years. Environmental and ecological campaigners were also gathering pace, concerned about the growing evidence of damage to marine and land environments, some of which was capturing public attention with large-scale disasters such as the *Braer* oil tanker disaster in Shetland in 1993 and the impact of the growing salmon farming industry (Booth 1995: 38–42). Key to this concern was the recognition that much of the decision making was out of local hands and decisions were being made for the benefit of remote companies extracting value from the region with no intention of returning benefits to the people or place (Mackinnon 2018:

278–300; Hunter 2012; Cameron 2020: 94–109). These debates echoed longstanding criticisms of absentee landlords, but were now applied to multinational corporations, as referenced for cultural and more comedic effect in the hit 1983 film *Local Hero* (Oria Gómez 2008: 1–14). However, counter action was brewing in the early 1990s, re-focused around landownership. On the Isle of Eigg, locals banded together to buy out their island and in 1992, communities in Assynt, in the west of Sutherland, overturned hundreds of years of private landownership to buy out the North Assynt Estate which had been sold multiple times since the 4th Duke of Sutherland had sold it in 1911 (National Library of Scotland 1913; Tindley 2010: 120-7; MacAskill 1999). It was the start of a new pushback against the social and ecological devastation and would come to be supported by new political structures in the twenty-first century.

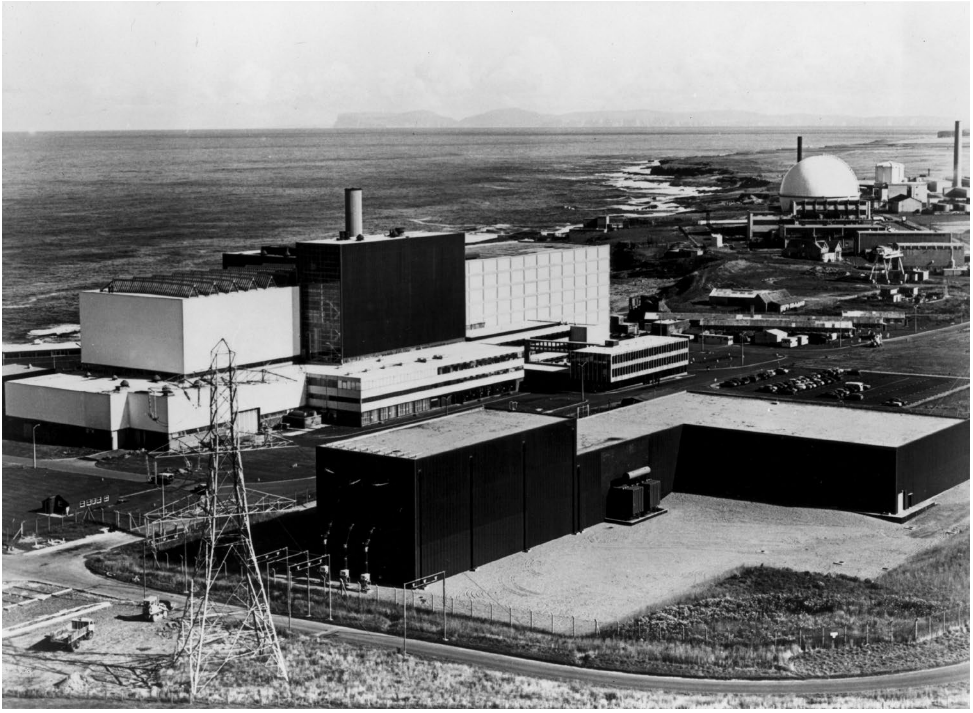

Fig 6.5 Dounreay nuclear power plant, established 1955. Wikipedia Commons.

Conclusions: addressing devastations?

The twenty-first century has seen both new approaches by government and NGOs and new concerns come into focus around the definition and remedies for the historical devastation of the landscape and communities of the Highlands and Islands (Cameron 2001: 83–114; Lorimer 2011). In many ways, this has come down to debates over means and ends: land reform (2003, 2014, 2024) and community empowerment legislation (2015) attempts to address the means in order to change the ends of politics, economics and cultures of landownership and therefore change priorities around land use and management. In a parallel process, a growing number of private and public/NGO landowners have been overhauling their land management practices to proactively face questions of climate crisis and seek to 'restore' or 'repair' the landscapes under their management, and some to actively rewild.[9] This raises interesting questions which are generating much heat, if not yet much light: what is the baseline or standard we should seek to restore a landscape to? How is that evidenced and how are those decisions being made? What are the effects on land values of carbon offsetting schemes, in environmental and social terms? State subsidies are helping this programme along but it is politically and in terms of public opinion highly controversial, subject to both scientific and democratic critiques (Allinson 2021: 14–19; MacKinnon and Oliver 2021: 147–156; Jamie 2008). While there is near universal agreement that the last two hundred and fifty years of landownership and management practices have had a deleterious effect on the landscape and ecosystem services, as well as a devastating effect on communities, there is little agreement about how and who should be leading that recovery (Hunter 2019; Lorimer et al 2018; Richards 2007: 63–5, 73–4; Marx 1853 in Ledbetter 2007: 113–9; Richards 1973: 276–7; MacLeod 1888; Withers 2005: 29).

When the Scottish Parliament was reconstituted in 1999, land reform was one of its top priorities, and has remained so, despite Scotland being one of the most urbanised and industrialised nations in Europe (Cameron 1993). Land reform and rural questions are of political interest to urban as well as rural voters in Scotland, a legacy of the historical processes described in this chapter and the place the Clearances hold in the popular consciousness. That place has never wavered, stoked by some of the most important cultural productions of twentieth century Scotland: the poetry of Sorley MacLean and Norman MacCaig, for example, or the novels of Neil M. Gunn (See for example, Gunn 1997; MacLean 1954; MacCaig and.MacCaig 2009. See also: Johnston 1909). The starkness with which the rural landscape has been exploited in the name of extractive (and often imperial) capitalism, firstly through food and leisure products such as sheep and deer, and latterly for energy (water, nuclear, oil, wind) has generated

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[9] See for example: https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/resources/334-our-strategy and https://wildland.scot/land-management [last accessed 12.7.24].

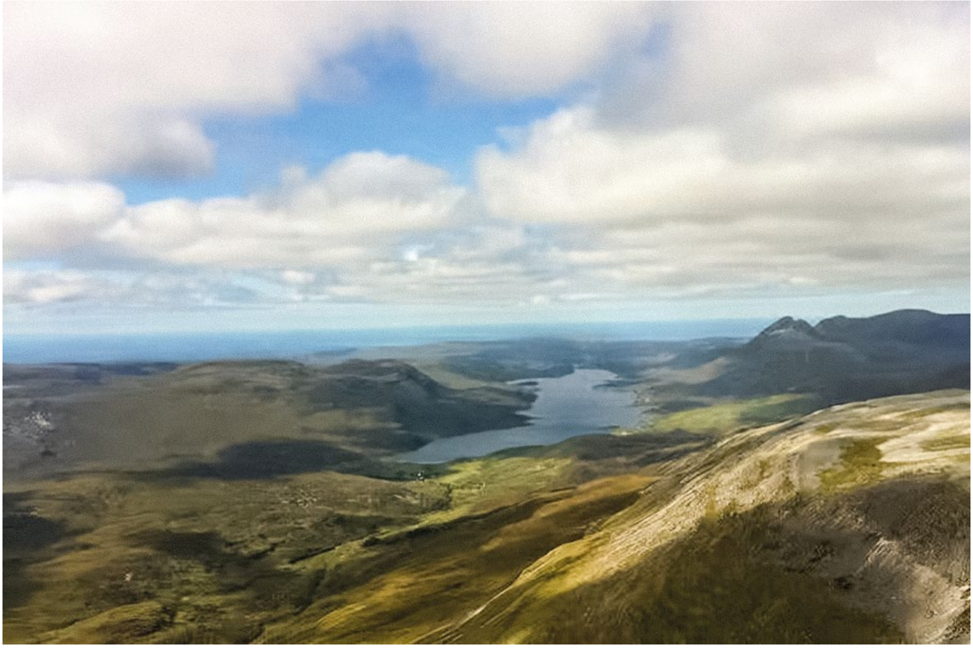

Fig 6.6 Assynt and the Inverpolly Forest from Ben More Assynt. Author's own.

a concurrent history of protest and resistance: the landscapes of devastation were never meekly surrendered. By the late nineteenth century this crystallised into the first of a long series of land reform acts, including one planned for 2024 which at time of this publication was at Stage One of its journey through parliament.[10] Much of this debate has placed the burden of blame for the ecological and community devastation on landowners, whether historically influenced by the profit or Romantic imperative (McIntosh et al. 1994: 64–70). More recently, newer charitable and organisational landowners such as the National Trust for Scotland and the John Muir Trust have also come in for criticism for presenting the region as 'wilderness', 'untouched nature' or at least capable of being so if properly 'restored', while setting aside entirely the communities living in those places. There are problematic consequences of this framing for government policy and implementation too, which have been distorted by these visions of wildness and which are shaping responses on the ground.

There is also a question of priorities and how historical trends over the long durée shape our responses today and for the future. To take the most obvious example, those communities of place (and interest) in rural Scotland who historically have been most affected by the decisions and processes outlined in this chapter. It is anachronistic to even suggest that they might have been consulted on the revolutionary changes which saw them removed from their land and livelihoods in the early nineteenth century. What is more surprising is how long it took – during a period which historians traditionally label one of growing democracy – for communities to have their hands on the levers of power and control over local decision-making and landscape management, in ways accepted for decades in other parts of Europe. Even now, this major shift in political culture is in its infancy in Scotland, and as more communities take on the ownership and management of landscape and land assets, they face additional challenges of the climate crisis and just transitions to Net Zero, which landowners overall were not actively facing even twenty years ago. They have to both shake off the historical constructs of power – including notions of power relations framed by Enlightenment and Romantic ideals of rural Scotland and what it should look like and for what purpose – and face contemporary existential challenges such as climate change and its impacts. This is a tall order, but the stakes are high: politicians and wider society are aware of the imperatives, but as in the early nineteenth century, dangers lie all around in terms of the potentially highly unequal and unjust nature of what needs to happen. Following examples in other contexts such as Norway and Finland, the Scottish Parliament is slowly shifting the legislative power balance towards communities and collectives to attempt to mitigate those dangers and to go some way to acknowledge the devastations of the past.

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[10] https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/land-reform-scotland-bill/overview; (Drayton 2000).

Biography

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7. Translation and Transformation: Re-shaping the Altepetl and Landscape in Early Colonial Mexico

Katherine Bellamy

Keywords Landscape; Worldview; Spatial Organisation; Transformation; Mesoamerica

Abstract The altepetl – literally translated as 'water-mountain' – was the principal unit of settlement organisation in the Late Postclassic period (1325–1521) in the area currently known as Central Mexico. A manifestation and embodiment of Nahua cosmovision, the altepetl is intricately connected to notions of landscape. Beginning in the Early Colonial period (1521–1585), Spanish rule oversaw the destruction and erosion of many Indigenous documentary records, architecture, social structures, and communities themselves. Beyond the severe and lasting impact this continues to have on Indigenous communities today, it has also hindered understandings of the altepetl and, therefore, landscape. Analysing the available source material through a landscape lens builds a deeper understanding of this historical period. Rather than a straightforward imposition of one worldview over another, a complex multi-participatory system emerges. Spanish attempts to extend control were fundamentally shaped by: a) pre-existing Indigenous organisation, b) active participation in, and exploitation of, the emerging system by Indigenous communities and individuals, and c) the landscape itself. This research recognises landscape as both a venue for, and shaper of, spatial organisation. With the altepetl as the conduit for analysis, it is possible to trace the translations and transformations of landscape through this period, highlighting continuities in the face of upheaval.

Katherine Bellamy: Translation and Transformation: Re-shaping the Altepetl and Landscape in Early Colonial Mexico. In: Lekakis, S. et al. (eds.), Towards an Archaeology of Devastation: Breaking/Replacing the People-Place Connection in Landscape. Heidelberg: heiBOOKS 2026, p. 141–160, DOI: https://doi.org/10.11588/heibooks.1613.c24604.

Introduction

Mesoamerican landscapes of the sixteenth century embody multiple histories, worldviews, and identities. The altepetl inhabits this landscape, a product and producer of community and identity. The principal unit of Indigenous settlement organisation prior to the Spanish conquest, the altepetl (pl. altepeme) can tell us a great deal about how their inhabitants understood the world and experienced landscape. The word itself is derived from the unification of the Nahuatl 'atl' and 'tepetl', or 'water' and 'mountain'. Beyond the Nahua communities within and around the Valley of Mexico, this unification of elements is seen across Mesoamerica,[1] with the 'water-mountain' appearing as 'an dehe nttoehe' in Otomí, and 'yucunduta' in Mixteco, for example (Fernández Christlieb 2014: 65). This combination of geographic elements hints toward the significance of the altepetl in relation to landscape. Not only a settlement organisation, this entity holds great significance for a community's identity, histories, and futures.

Easily recognised as a form of settlement organisation, the altepetl – and its equivalents – as a concept, however, is considerably more complex. Since the sixteenth century, attempts to translate the full meaning of the altepetl into exogenous languages fall short. Variously translated as 'pueblo', 'corporate town', 'city-state', and 'estado nativo' (native state) (Gibson 1991: 267; Carrasco 1999: 40; Reyes García 2000: 34–35; Gutiérrez Mendoza 2012: 29), such translations cannot encompass the full complexity of the altepetl, and can obscure its meaning. Attempts to understand the altepetl continue to evade precise definition, with uncertainty surrounding its functioning (including how it operated with subordinate settlement types such as the calpulli and tlaxilacalli) as well as its conceptual significance (defining precisely how the altepetl is situated within pre-colonial Indigenous worldviews). Investigations into the entity are further complicated by the sparse documentary record for the pre-colonial period, with countless documentary sources of Indigenous communities destroyed during the Spanish conquest and its aftermath. Seeking an equivalent for the altepetl in other languages (and worldviews) is a further detriment to such investigations. Rather than comparing the altepetl's functioning to that of the Spanish 'pueblo' (town), for example, it is more beneficial to consider the altepetl in relation to the landscape from which it emerged and helped to shape.

The early years of Spanish rule witnessed the transformation of settlement and spatial organisations, with significant impacts on the landscape. Following their arrival to the shores of Mesoamerica in April 1519, the Spanish led by Hernán Cortés encountered many altepeme on their journey inland from Veracruz, arriving to the huey (great) altepetl of Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco in November of the same year. This huey altepetl was the most influential of three altepeme that formed the Excan Tlatoloyan (Triple Alliance), generally referred to as the Aztec Empire. Tenochtitlan and its sister altepetl Tlatelolco were founded on a small island within Lake Texcoco (one of the great interconnected lakes which then spanned the Valley of Mexico), with Tlacopan and Texcoco – the other members of the Triple Alliance – located on its shores. Tenochtitlan and the Triple Alliance grew in prominence through the late fifteenth century, amassing an extensive tribute network across Mesoamerica (Figure 7.1). Entering into this complex network of relations, the Spanish sought alliances with those altepeme rival to the Triple Alliance. Amassing considerable support from communities including Tlaxcala (a rival and neighbouring huey altepetl with its own extensive tributary network) and following a series of failed attempts, Cortés eventually commanded a successful assault on Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco in 1521. Installing himself as governor, Cortés began the process of colonial reorganisation of territory from the former Tenochtitlan, establishing Mexico City in its place.

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[1] Mesoamerica can be considered a historic geographical and cultural area, comprising present-day central and southern Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and extending south to parts of Nicaragua and Costa Rica (see Figure 7.1).

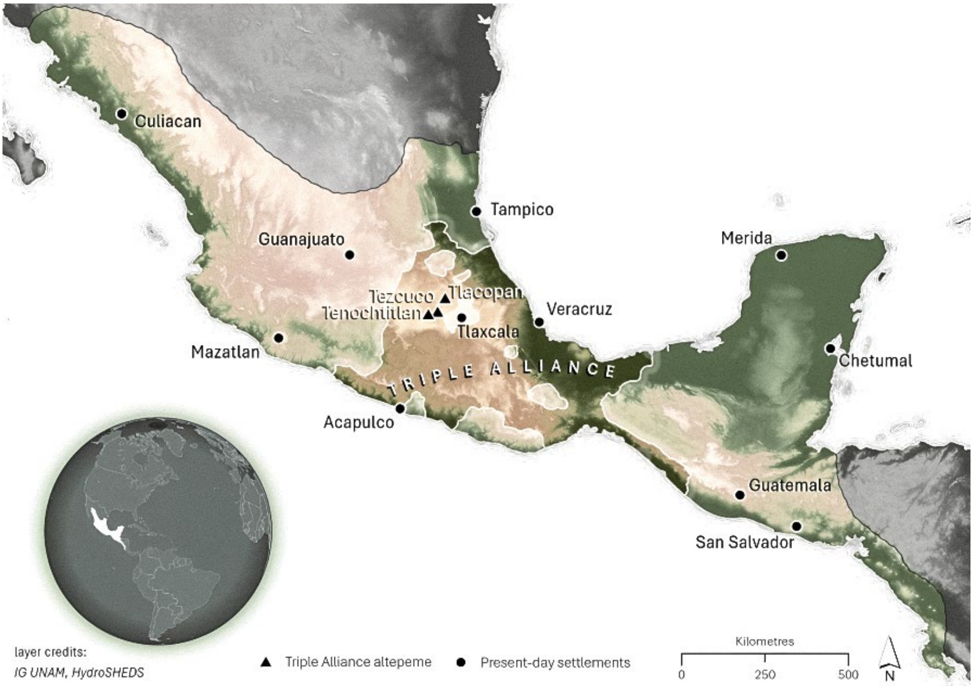
Culiacan
Tampico
Guanajuato
Merida
Tezcuco
Tlacopan
Tenochtitlan
Veracruz
Tlaxcala
Mazatlan
Chetumal
TRIPLE ALLIANCE
Acapulco
Guatemala
San Salvador
layer credits:
IG UNAM, HydroSHEDS
▲ Triple Alliance altepeme
● Present-day settlements
Kilometres
0
250
500
N

Fig 7.1 Mesoamerica and Triple Alliance extent, c. 1520.

The year 1521 marks the break between the so-called Late Postclassic (1325–1521) and the Early Colonial periods (1521–1585). Such periodisation has been critiqued from numerous angles, including: the application of a naming system derived from Eurocentric classifications to Mesoamerican contexts; the restrictive nature of linear classifications, at odds with Indigenous Mesoamerican understandings of time as cyclical; and the false precision of marking a break between periods in history (García Chávez and Moragas Segura 2018; Jiménez Osorio and Posselt Santoyo 2018: 37). Such periodisation has its functions, certainly, but these demarcations can hinder understandings of transformations that transcend otherwise arbitrary temporal classifications.

Whilst the fall of Tenochtitlan in 1521 was certainly a significant event in the history of Mesoamerica, this a) was not entirely dissimilar from previous transfers of power experienced in the region, and b) had varying impacts on different Indigenous communities. Founded in 1325, Tenochtitlan and its inhabitants – the Mexica – were relatively recent arrivals to the Valley of Mexico, able to take advantage of existing instability and rivalries in the region, following (and drawing upon the prestige of) former powers in the region: Tula (c. 900–1150 CE) and Teotihuacan (c. 1–750 CE). Supplanting the Triple Alliance in 1521, Spanish attempts to extend control took place within the existing complex and interwoven networks of Mesoamerica. Their early reliance on this existing system shaped the extension of control, and arguably ensured the continuity of certain aspects of Indigenous organisation. Indeed, Horn has argued that it was 'Spanish reliance on indigenous organization' in the early postconquest period that 'reinforced the unity of the altepetl and enhanced its importance' (Horn 1997: 19). Looking beyond the colonial period, it has been noted that 'many municipalities today still have the same limits as the original *altepetl*.' (Fernández Christlieb 2015: 340).

The altepetl (and its equivalents) was the entity with which the Spanish were required to interact wherever they sought to extend political or religious control. The Spanish were aware of the socio-political significance of the altepetl, as well as the potential for exploiting its associated existing structures. The extent to which they understood the full significance of the altepetl as a concept or ideal, however, is less clear. This is a vital distinction and demonstrates the broader differences in cosmovision that affected landscape in the early colonial period. Observing these changes through the lens of devastation, querying their precise form and impact, offers the opportunity to understand the nuances of such transformations. With the altepetl representative of both community and landscape, this entity further enables the tracing of complex concepts through this period of translation and transformation.

Altepetl and Landscape

The altepetl cannot be understood separated from the landscape which it inhabits. Bringing together two key features of the landscape – ‘atl’ and ‘tepetl’, 'water’ and ‘mountain’– the altepetl’s connection to landscape is indicated at the most superficial level. Delving deeper, however, reveals the interwoven relations between the altepetl, landscape, and worldview. Landscape studies more broadly have demonstrated that landscape is ‘a way of seeing, a composition and structuring of the world’ (Cosgrove, 1985: 55). Meanwhile, settlements can act as both a product and reflection of landscape. Tuan places the city – and its constituent parts – as a response to the human need to ‘articulate experiences’, recreating landscape and ‘mythical space’: ‘The small mirrors the large. The small is accessible to all human senses. Its messages, being confined within a small area, are readily perceived and understood. Architectural space – a house, a temple, or a city – is a microcosm possessing a lucidity that natural features lack’ (Tuan, 1977: 100). This is a dualistic relationship, where landscapes ‘in turn, become a mirror of a community. Landscapes are products of communities’ relationships with their surroundings, as each generation lives its life and bestows meaning on those surroundings' (Anschuetz, Wilshusen and Scheick 2001: 190).

In Mesoamerican landscapes, such mirroring of the environment is abundantly clear in the altepetl. Fernández Christlieb has discussed this relation, highlighting a parity between the notion of ‘landscape’ and ‘altepetl’ in the sixteenth century (Fernández Christlieb 2015). More broadly, investigations into Mesoamerican Indigenous worldviews – or cosmovisions – have elaborated upon the dynamic relations between communities and features of the landscape. ‘Symbolic value is attached to *geographical* features like mountains, springs, lakes or caves; they become part of a cosmovision. In this way, societies create meaningful sacred landscapes that are transformed into ritual landscapes by the performance of ceremonies in these places’ (Broda 2015: 220). The altepetl, inhabiting and reproducing this landscape, is therefore situated not only as a means to organise and sustain human settlement, but as a conduit for wider cosmovision and community identity. The altepetl itself ‘was considered a symbolic replica of the greater cosmos that materialized within the language of architectural forms. As a replica of the universe, the city provided more than shelter and a meeting place for economic activities: it was a sacred environment where human beings and divinities interacted’ (Bernal-García 1993: 2). It is clear, therefore, that the altepetl is far more than a settlement, but what that settlement represents, in relation to cosmovision, landscape, and community.

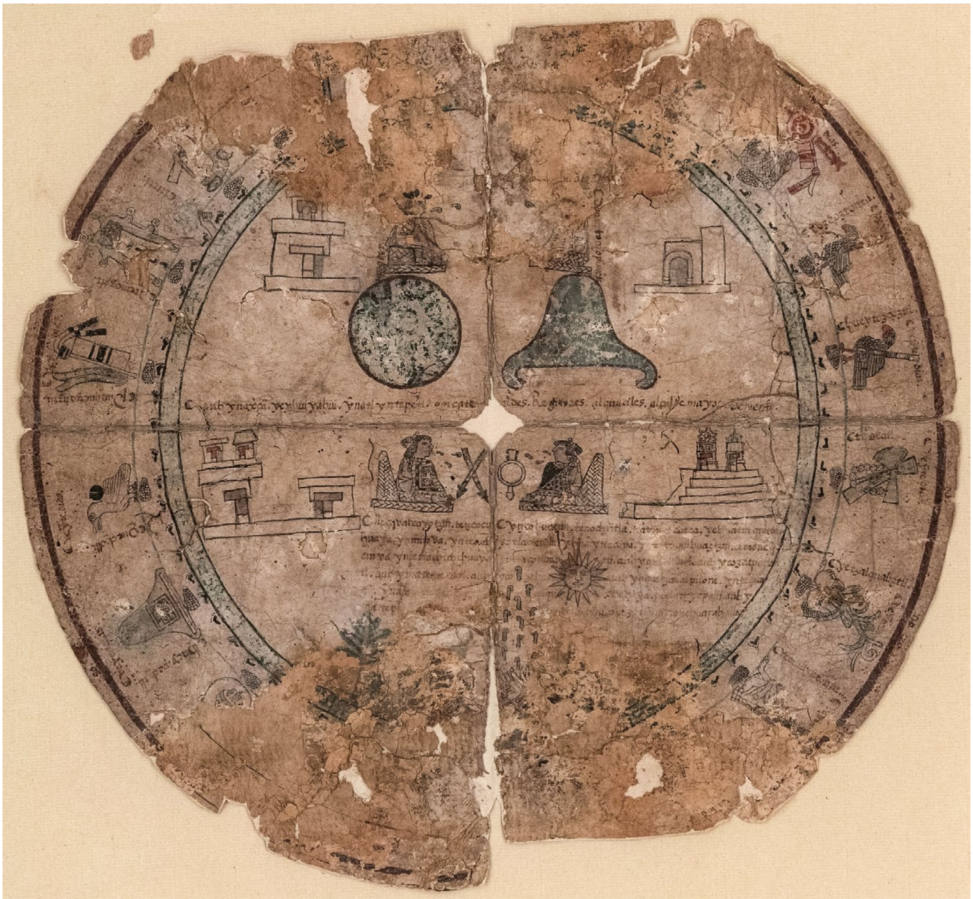

Fig 7.2 'atl' and 'tepetl' glyphs, depicted side by side in the upper left and right quadrants. ('Boban calendar wheel', 1545)

Specifically, the combination of 'atl' and 'tepetl' – water and mountain – directly calls upon the cosmovision of this landscape. For Nahua and other Indigenous Mesoamerican communities, duality is a central tenet of worldview. Philosophically, this duality is expressed through 'oppositional pairs', which are not restricted to being oppositional in a single sense of the word; for example, such pairs can be contradictory, complementary, associational, and (a)symmetrical (López Austin 2011: 173). These dualistic relationships are articulated linguistically through paired words or phrases called *difrasismos*. Coined by Garibay Kintana, a *difrasismo* is 'a pairing of two metaphors that, together, provide a way of expressing a single thought' (Garibay Kintana, 1953: 19). Such dualisms can serve as a succinct method to convey complex concepts, but also to invoke the importance – above all else – of *relationships*. By bringing entities into direct relation with one another, more complex meanings are forged. 'Yn atl, yn tepetl' is one such pairing. The root for the word altepetl, this particular difrasismo expresses the symbolic meanings behind 'water' and 'mountain' both as individual and combined entities. The altepetl, therefore, is not just a settlement, but inherits the 'water-mountain' and all its associated meanings. Conceived as a mountain containing water, the 'atl, tepetl' dynamic is foundational for the altepetl, a settlement reflecting its landscape and harbouring life itself.

The significance of 'water' and 'mountain', brought together in the altepetl, is abundantly clear when observing the landscape in which the altepetl resides. The undulating terrain of much of Mesoamerica – typified by hills and valleys – facilitates the gathering of water in basins, with the landscape harbouring water just as the altepetl is, in turn, conceived as a mountainous vessel containing water. The landscape is reflected in the architecture of the altepetl, too. The focal point of any altepetl – the heart of its sacred precinct – is the teocalli, a pyramid temple dedicated to the patron deity of the given altepetl. The teocalli simultaneously acts as a recreation of a mountain in the vicinity, usually one associated with the altepetl as being home to the patron deity. For example, Tenochtitlan's huey teocalli (also known as Templo Mayor, 'Great Temple') is known for its association with Mount Coatepetl, for example, and a direct association with the birthplace of their patron deity, Huitzilopochtli (Johansson K. 2016: 242). Meaning is thereby built, layer upon layer, creating and recreating landscape and community.

The difrasismo 'yn atl, yn tepetl' has the capacity to express these more complex meanings underpinning the altepetl succinctly, going far beyond the surface-level meaning implied by water (providing the means for life) and mountain (a defensible location). In the altepetl, these meanings cascade; it is the physical settlement and what the physical structures represent, and it is the community, in past, present, and future. The altepetl's capacity to embody the community across space-time, is particularly significant in the context of flux, an essential force in Mesoamerican Indigenous cosmovision.

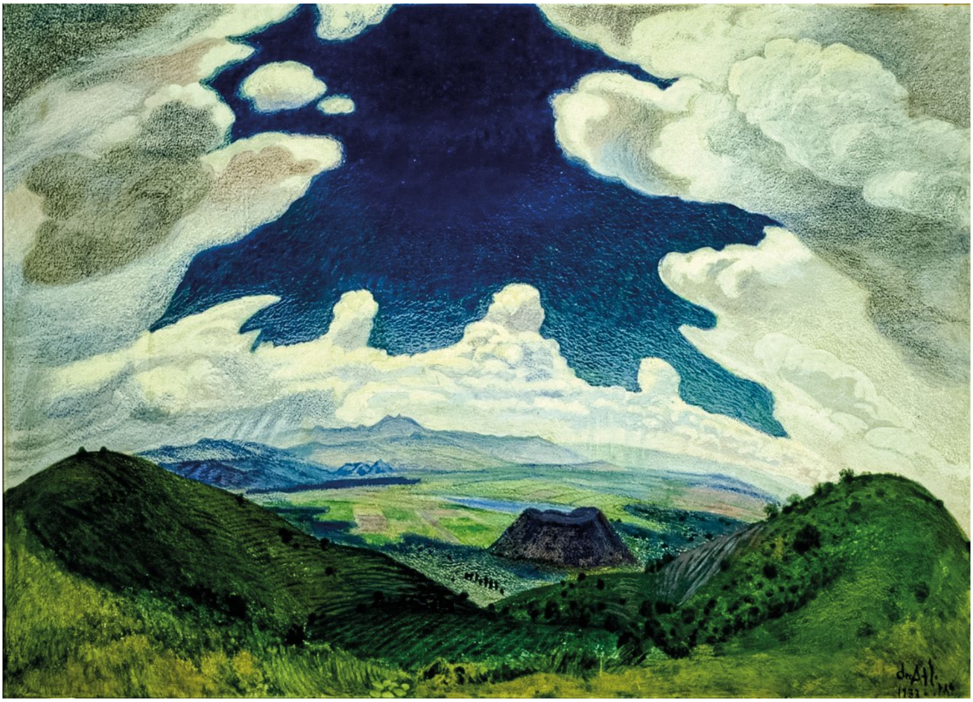

Fig 7.3 Nubes Sobre El Valle de México. (Murillo Coronado, 1933)

The landscape that the altepetl inhabits is governed, above all else, by flux. Abundantly clear in the geography of central Mexico, this volcanic landscape is in a constant – though variable – state of flux. Surrounded by mountains and volcanoes, and forming an endorheic basin, the Valley of Mexico harboured a system of interconnected lakes across the valley floor (now almost completely enveloped by the urban sprawl of Mexico City). The formation of these extensive lakes was variable depending on the season and weather patterns. A specific case, the Valley of Mexico is nevertheless demonstrative of the water-mountain dynamic, and certainly contributed to Tenochtitlan's appeal as an embodiment of this ideal.

Successful settlement in a world governed by flux required a deep knowledge of the geological and meteorological phenomena in action. Tenochtitlan's immense growth is testament to this, far extending beyond the original confines of the small island on Lake Texcoco where it was first founded in 1325. Feats of engineering – through land reclamation, construction of extensive aqueducts, and efficient management of both fresh and saline water sources – enabled the success of an altepetl in this challenging environment. Indeed, prior to Tenochtitlan's founding, the island there was considered inhospitable. Success in this landscape, therefore, was hugely dependent upon both an understanding of, and adaptability to, flux.

The influence of flux is clear in the cosmovision of Mesoamerican Indigenous communities. Rather than a resistance to this flux, it is instead understood as a fact of life, subject to the forces of the gods. The 'cosmic era in which the Mexicas lived' is known as the Fifth Sun (Moctezuma and López Luján 1993: 158). The existence of this Sun (or era) was forged by four gods 'who had dominated the world as suns,' meeting 'to balance their forces and create the new Sun.' (Astorga Poblete 2014: 51). With the very existence of the world predicated upon the forging of stability out of uncertainty, the pursuit of continuity in the midst of flux was essential to Nahua thought. Human settlement more generally can be considered as a response to this need to forge stability out of flux. Tuan observed that the 'traditional city symbolized, first, transcendental and man-made order against the chaotic forces of terrestrial and infernal nature' (Tuan, 1977: 173). In Mesoamerica, the altepetl embodied this stability, physically and symbolically harbouring life, and enabling the construction of a shared past and future.

With the altepetl embodying these complex and intertwined meanings, the imposition of Spanish rule in the early colonial period had complex effects, both directly and indirectly. Reconstructing the altepetl as it existed prior to (and during) the colonial period of Spanish rule is, however, a challenging task. Whether approached as a political or economic entity, or as a conceptual idea(l), the altepetl remains somewhat ambiguous. Put simply, the altepetl defies strict definition. Rather than seeing this as a challenge, however, acceptance of this reality presents an opportunity for more complete understandings of the entity. Seeking to translate the altepetl and neatly categorise it into European notions of hierarchical spatial organisation, for example, fails to encompass the complexity of this entity.

The years following the fall of Tenochtitlan witnessed considerable changes to the landscapes of Mesoamerica. Destruction and disruption were certainly key aspects of the process of Spanish colonisation, and has had lasting ramifications for Indigenous communities as well as understandings of the altepetl and landscape. This was not, however, a straightforward or inevitable imposition. Indigenous Mesoamericans were active participants on the shaping of this new landscape, using the tools of Spanish governance in pursuit of their own agendas. Furthermore, Spanish reliance on existing Indigenous social, political, and economic structures to facilitate their expansion shaped the emerging Viceroyalty of New Spain as much as the reverse. The altepetl, as an interlocuter between settlement and landscape, offers the potential for understanding both the changes and continuities of the early colonial period. Whilst the altepetl is difficult to identify in the colonial period, this is not necessarily an absence. The altepetl may not be directly referenced, but its associated meanings and significance certainly are. Addressing landscape and altepetl as interconnected entities therefore presents an opportunity to trace the extent to which translations and transformations of the period affected these entities and their associated meanings. With landscape as both an arena for, and architect of, change, tracing continuities across pre-defined temporal boundaries becomes possible.

Translation and Transformation

The early colonial period in New Spain witnessed translation and transformation, for both Spanish and Indigenous communities. This was not a one-way imposition, but an emerging multi-participatory system that both Spanish and Indigenous communities shaped. Comprehending the extent of Spanish colonialism – and, indeed, any colonial project – is a complex endeavour. For example, epidemics, enslavement of the Indigenous populace, and forced resettlement of communities are all factors that contributed to demographic decline in the early colonial period and beyond. It is well known that there was 'catastrophic decline in the native population here between 1520 and 1620', however, 'the extent of the decline is in dispute' (Gerhard, 1972: 23). In addition, colonial era (and later) impositions on the physical landscape mean that the reconstruction of built environments is complicated by impositions and absences in the archaeological record. Core architectural features of Indigenous settlements were frequently destroyed by the Spanish and subsequently replaced with colonial structures. Theoretically quantifiable impacts such as these are nevertheless difficult to measure due to absences in the historical record.

Furthermore, impacts that are less easily quantifiable are even more challenging to fully account for. The destruction of countless pre-colonial Mesoamerican documentary sources during and following the Spanish conquest is indicative of such challenges. Mesoamerican Indigenous communities have a rich and extensive written tradition, with document types ranging from the management of tribute payments, to ritual and astronomical calendars, to genealogical and historical records of altepeme (Hill Boone 1998). Such documents served to assist the functioning of altepeme, from the administration of daily life to the recording and shaping of community history and identity. The loss of so many of these documents, therefore, constitutes a monumental loss of knowledge and a direct attack on community identity.

Acts of destruction such as these are not confined to the moment in which they are committed, but has cascading impacts upon notions of community and landscape, across time and space. With complex concepts such as community and worldview a challenge to trace through this period of transformation in Mesoamerica, recognising the association between altepetl and landscape presents an opportunity to understand changes more cohesively. With landscape as both the venue for, and shaper of, spatial organisation, the following pages will assess how Spanish agendas were fundamentally shaped by: pre-existing Indigenous organisation; the active participation in – and exploitation of – the emerging system by Indigenous communities and individuals; and the landscape in which this re-shaping occurred.

Arriving into these Mesoamerican landscapes, the Spanish were required to adapt to existing systems before any consideration of expanding their own. The success of the altepetl and its associated socio-political organisation was abundantly clear to the Spanish, exemplified most visibly in the grandeur and power of Tenochtitlan, head of the Triple Alliance. Despite recognising the altepetl's success, within a year of the fall of Tenochtitlan, Cortés began the process of redistributing 'almost the entire Indian population of central Mexico in *déposito* or encomienda to himself and his conquistador companions.' (Gerhard, 1972: 8). This was the first of many steps towards the reorganisation of territory across Mesoamerica, and demonstrative of a fundamentally different relation to space and place. In early colonial Mexico, the *encomienda* system redistributed the former Indigenous system of draft rotary labour, coatequitl, and diverted it to an encomendero (the title holder, who was usually Spanish) using the previously established authority of the ruler of the altepetl (Lockhart 1998: 35). This decision to hijack the existing Indigenous system of labour, bypassing the overarching structures of the altepetl and its constituent parts, is significant.

Exploiting the existing system in this way simultaneously relied upon the existing authority of the altepetl and sought to undermine it. In establishing encomienda in the Valley, Cortés ordered the reassignment of 'all the lands that had been held by any of the Triple Alliance rulers in the territories of other kings and gave these lands to the local rulers. He also took away any lands these local rulers may have had outside their domains and compensated them with lands taken from the Triple Alliance rulers.' (Hicks 1992: 8). By prioritising geographic proximity over existing community relations, this imposition fundamentally affected relations not only between communities and social structures, but with the landscape itself. The introduction of Spanish social structures typically saw altepeme becoming reclassified as cabeceras, and the constituent calpulli and tlaxilacalli becoming barrios, sujetos, or estancias, with the latter distinctions usually decided based upon their proximity to the cabecera (Gerhard, 1972: 27). Based upon an urban-rural dichotomy, Spanish conceptions of space were a departure from Indigenous understandings. This manifested in the physical settlement, too. 'The Mesoamerican city aspired to replicate the surrounding landscape in an effort to link nature and society. This concept contrasts with the traditional European objective to detach the urban environment from the law of Nature.' (Bernal-García 1993: 362). Such distinctions are indicative of the broader differences in cosmovision, and how these impositions attacked existing notions of landscape and, therefore, the altepetl.

Despite attempts to supplant the Indigenous social organisation, certain continuities endured. Mundy notes examples of how Indigenous residents represented themselves within early colonial Mexico City, with tlaxilacalli identifiers 'consistently appended to personal names' (Mundy 2015: 137). Here, even at the nexus of Spanish rule, Indigenous community identification remained. Certain continuities also emerged with responses to the Spanish policies of *reducción* and *congregación*. Policies that sought to remove Indigenous communities from their existing settlements – with justifications ranging from the economic (exploitation of a potential labour force) to religious (conversion to Christianity, and a belief 'that it was bad for people to live in a scattered way' (Gerhard, 1977: 385) – were meanwhile shaped by the Mesoamerican cosmovision. Landscape features that had been a requirement for the foundation of an altepetl prior to the conquest remained significant in this new system, with evidence of Indigenous communities resisting 'friars' intentions to establish a town or monastery' when 'features like springs, rivers, caves, and…mountains' were not present (Bernal-García 1993: 196).

The exploitation of the Indigenous populace, integral to the functioning of Spanish governance, is well documented in the historical record. For example, the repartimiento system 'of the late sixteenth century was everywhere one of compulsion and abuse, and it received continuous criticism from the clergy' (Gibson 1991: 233). Yet, simultaneously, this institution served 'maintain the pre-conquest tribal precedents' (Gibson 1991: 27). The historical record can give an indication of the extent of abuses committed against Indigenous communities, of the pressures of population decline, and of changing relations to landscape. The construction of a convent at Apan, for example, caused protests amongst the local Indigenous population who were ordered to work on its construction, 'arguing that they could not attend that repartimiento, as they were repairing their churches or assisting with other repartimientos' (Jiménez Abollado and Ramírez Calva 2010: 204). Complaints against such demands were not uncommon. Indeed, Indigenous communities were active participants in the shaping of early colonial Mexico, often taking advantage of the very systems meant to advance Spanish interests.

Indigenous communities' frequent – and often successful – engagement with the very system designed by and for Spanish interests is apparent. As individuals and as communities, Indigenous people advocated for their rights, ranging from requests for fairer treatment of labourers to the enforcement of historic land claims. Indigenous communities participated so actively and successfully with these systems, to a degree that Viceroy Martín Enríquez considered that Indigenous people should not have access to the legal system (Ruiz Medrano 2010: 61). Kellogg found 'that Indians won the majority of trials in the sixteenth century that involved both themselves and Spaniards' (qtd. in Ruiz Medrano 2010: 60). Indigenous communities also engaged with the emerging hierarchical structures, with cabecera status recognised as an opportunity to improve their standing and influence. Horn presents the case of San Agustín de las Cuevas – subject to the cabecera (formerly, altepetl) of Coyoacan – achieving cabecera status itself by leveraging its strategic position on a key trade and transportation route, gaining independence perhaps motivated by 'ethnic differences rooted in preconquest arrangements' (Horn 1997: 37).

In addition, this participation often reflected long-standing traditions, enacted in these new conditions. Despite the widespread destruction of precolonial Indigenous documents, surviving manuscripts, and newly created ones, were now produced as evidence in Spanish legal proceedings. The documents accepted as part of such legal proceedings offer unique insights into the changing notions of landscape in this period of transformation. Both historic and new manuscripts were produced as part of such legal proceedings. The established precedent of Mesoamerican Indigenous communities' strong documentary tradition was recognised and accepted by the Spanish, legitimising their use in colonial contexts. Pulido Rull has highlighted land grant cases as being demonstrative of the role of Indigenous 'artists in colonial society and the incorporation of indigenous practices in the colonial world' (Pulido Rull 2020: 43). A logographic rather than alphabetic writing tradition, precolonial Indigenous manuscripts were not always readily understandable by the Spanish. In the colonial period, new forms of document emerged, combining Indigenous and Spanish written traditions in response to the requirements of participation in this system.

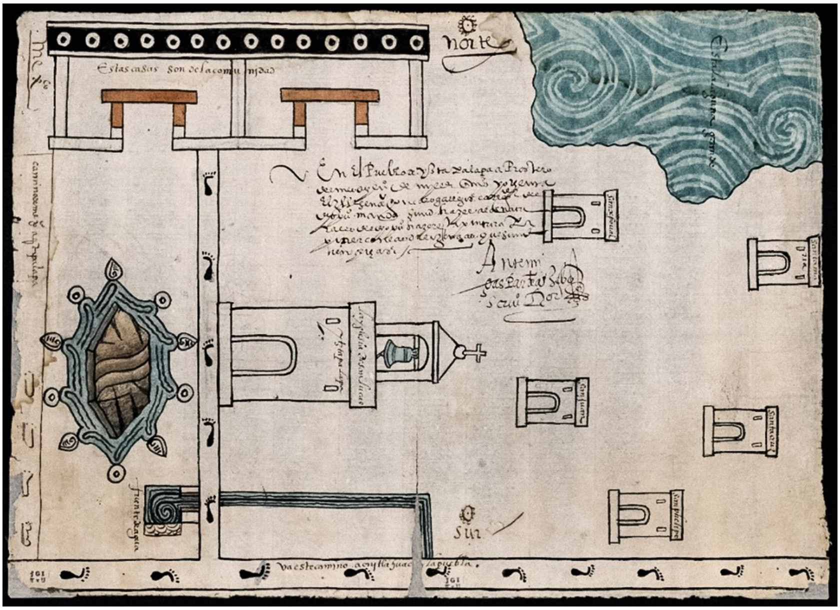

Fig 7.4 A pintura showing the settlement of Iztapalapa and its surrounding communities. ('Pintura de Iztapalapa', 1580)

Indigenous communities recognised the potential of participating in these legal systems, and engaged proactively and creatively. Ruiz Medrano also notes cases of Indigenous communities seeking to deceive the colonial authorities by presenting certain documents under false pretences. For example, exploiting Spanish unfamiliarity with Indigenous writing systems by claiming historic documents supported a certain claim when in fact they served an entirely different purpose, or 'retouching' historic documents 'so the courts would mistake them for the appropriate documents' (Ruiz Medrano 2010: 103). Requests for information by the Spanish were also met with responses that demonstrate a continuity of Indigenous writing traditions. The *Relaciones Geográficas de la Nueva España* were a series of reports requested by the Spanish Crown, seeking to amass a range of information about the territories of New Spain. As part of this endeavour, a 'map of the area' was requested in addition to a 'detailed textual report' (Cline, 1964: 341). Whilst imposition of Spanish systems is clear in many of these documents, a continuity of Indigenous cosmovision is also reflected. Figure 7.4, for example, shows the pintura produced for Iztapalapa's response to the Relaciones Geográficas. Whilst the sixteenth century Spanish church is a central element in the piece, its positioning is directly above a depiction of a cave, surrounded by water, drawn in the typical traditional style. At the same time, Indigenous footprints traverse the pintura, claiming this space and demonstrating a continuity of presence.

It is essential to highlight, too, that the creation of Indigenous manuscripts in the colonial period was of course not restricted to those produced in relation to Spanish requirements. Indeed, manuscripts continued to be produced by and for Indigenous communities. Whilst the majority of manuscripts readily available today are those produced 'to be used in trials and judicial hearings', it is known that many documents were produced 'for internal use, especially in connection with matters of tradition and the observance of autochthonous customs and rituals' (Ruiz Medrano 2010: 31). This continued expression of self-determination and recording of community histories and futures is deeply connected to landscape and the altepetl.

The word used to identify many of these pictorial manuscripts (such as the one shown in Figure 7.4) is 'pintura'. Whilst the manuscripts can certainly be considered as maps, the term pintura denotes a specific contemporary significance in the sixteenth century. More than just a painting, 'pintura was the representation of the land as well as a legal instrument to claim it' (Fernández Christlieb 2015: 335). With the Spanish equivalent for landscape (paisaje) not emerging until the eighteenth century, Fernández Christlieb offers pintura as a viable synonym. The pinturas of the early colonial period, therefore, offer unique insights into changing perceptions of landscape through this era of transformation. Although beyond the scope of this piece, thorough consideration of the significance and nuance of these documents has been conducted by art historians, demonstrating continuities in Mesoamerican cosmovision throughout the sixteenth century (Hill Boone 2000; Mundy 2000; Russo 2005).

Meanwhile, the physical landscape was subjected to considerable transformations in the sixteenth century. Changing agricultural practices, the introduction of livestock, and the transformation of built environments had lasting impacts. For example, in 1589 the community of Tepeapulco initiated proceedings against a Diego Juarez, 'regarding damages to their sown fields caused by livestock' ('Tierras, vol. 2879, exp. 9, fs. 193.', 1592). The built environment of the altepetl, too, was subjected to colonial impositions. The altepetl was a reflection of the landscape, an embodiment of Mesoamerican cosmovision. At the centre of the altepetl was the teocalli, the sacred temple that reflected and recreated the sacred mountain, and the ideal of the water-mountain. When the Spanish sought to reorganise existing altepeme, the teocalli was a frequent target. Their targeted destruction was a clear attack not only on the built environment, but on what these structures represented. The component parts of the teocalli were then reconstructed, transformed into a Spanish church and often built directly in place of the former teocalli site. Taking the teocalli as an emblematic case, it is easy to follow the cascade effect that follows an act of deliberate devastation. A core symbol of the altepetl and landscape, the destruction of the teocalli is a direct attack on Indigenous cosmovision, and the histories and futures of the community. Here, landscape devastation is at once a physical and symbolic act, deeply embedded within the processes of colonisation.

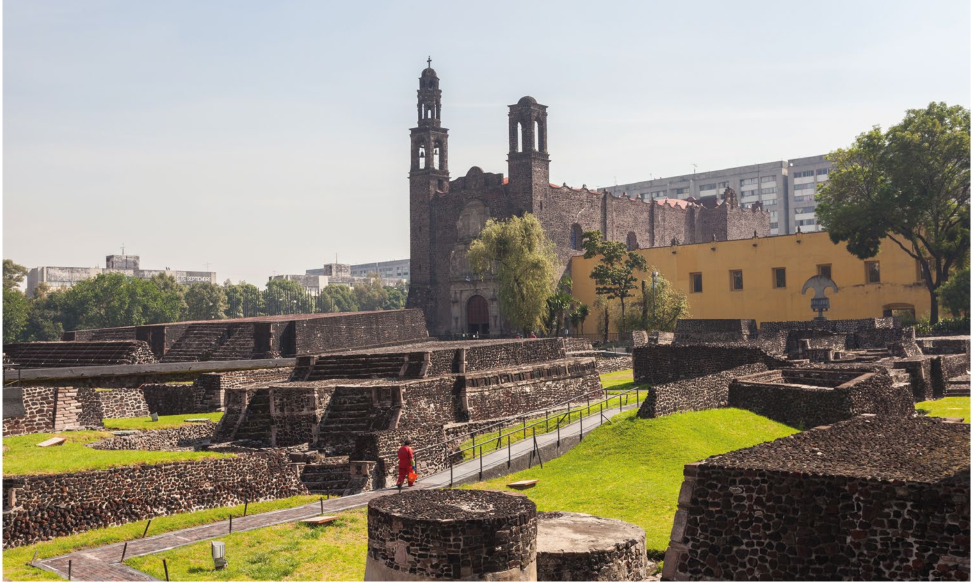

Fig 7.5 Tlatelolco and the Santiago Tlatelolco church. (Delso 2013)

Re-Shaping the Altepetl

The act of translating or transforming something can be seen as inherently destructive, requiring the loss of something in the process of facilitating change. The translation of Indigenous oral histories and painted manuscripts, for example, has been described as 'an inherently colonial act.' (Hill Boone 2000: 6). These are translations not only between languages, but between worldviews. On the translation of Nahua manuscripts, Florescano writes: 'Before these ideograms were transferred to the European alphabet, their reading was another, indigenous; but as soon as they were transferred to the new alphabet and transformed into texts with a univocal meaning and explanation, they acquired the categories and values of western culture.' (Florescano 1994: 123). Such observations are a reminder of the necessity to understand and prioritise the contexts in which concepts such as the altepetl were formed. Intricately connected with landscape, the altepetl cannot be understood solely as a unit of settlement organisation, but must be considered in the broader contexts of its meaning for Mesoamerican cosmovisions. The water mountain is a harbourer of life, but also a vessel that contains and produces community identities, histories, and futures. Acts of destruction, physical or symbolic, upon such an entity therefore have a litany of consequences.

The notion of 'organised' or 'structured forgetting' has been presented separately as a tool for the destruction or construction community identity. Kundera writes that 'when a big power wants to deprive a smaller one of its national identity, of its self-consciousness, it uses what he calls the method of organized forgetting' (qtd. in Le Guin, 1989: 82–83). Abercrombie, on the other hand, remarks that the 'arts of memory, that is, require not only remembering but also what might be called structured forgetting' (Abercrombie 1998: 117). Seemingly at odds, both of these reflections on forgetting, and its relation to the construction of memory, can be true. This dichotomy – this duality – is visible in the translations and transformations of early colonial New Spain. Acts of destruction by the colonial power directly and indirectly attacked Indigenous identity and worldview. Despite this, the relationship enacted through the altepetl and landscape – both products of a cosmovision understood to be perpetually subject to flux – enabled the continuity of identities and worldviews far beyond the colonial period. Recognition of the processes and consequences of translations and transformations is a necessity for understanding the impacts and responses to devastation. In the contexts of colonial histories, where exogenous cosmovisions seek to supplant Indigenous ones, these acts of devastation are enacted upon settlements and landscapes, but seek to disrupt community identity, histories, and futures. Yet, the Mesoamerican Indigenous landscape – and the altepetl – was the venue for these translations and transformations, demanding Spanish deference to existing notions of space and place.

Chalchimmalacayotimanin
atl o yan tepetl huiya
çan quetzaltonameyotimani Mexico

Creating circles of jade the city stretches out,
radiating light rays like quetzal feathers,
Mexico is here

(León Portilla 2011: 294–95)

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Biography

Katherine Bellamy is an interdisciplinary researcher specialising in historical geographies. She holds an MLitt in Transnational, Global, and Spatial History from the University of St Andrews, and a PhD in History from Lancaster University. Her PhD investigated Indigenous representations of space, place, and landscape and their changes in Central Mexico between the Late Postclassic and Early Colonial periods. Her broader research employs Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Digital Humanities methods for the aggregation and analysis of disparate data. She has also worked as a Research Assistant on numerous academic projects, contributing to the design and analysis of diverse historical datasets.

Persistence

8. Memorial Fragments – Ruin Interactions, Spatial Concepts and Narratives at the Neolithic Settlement of Göbekli Tepe, Türkiye

Julia Schönicke and Moritz Kinzel

Keywords Ruin Interacations; Disruptive Events; Re-Use; Memory Spaces; Neolithic

Abstract The Neolithic settlement of Göbekli Tepe (SE Türkiye, ca. 9500–8000 cal BCE) sits on a limestone plateau and is well-known for its monumental special buildings. With increasing size of the settlement, the buildings accumulated on the steep slopes of the plateau. Inevitably, the load forced on the wall structures of the special buildings downslope became too heavy (after strong rain- or snowfalls) causing severe landslides. The Neolithic people reacted to the challenging periodical destruction of their built environment and put great effort into maintaining the structures which became part of their daily practices for centuries. We demonstrate that ruins within the settlement served as sources for extracting building material. Re-using building materials can be seen as incidental routines whereas others might have been intentional ritual practices. Post-abandonment interactions, in turn, are detectable in room fills and their geochemical composition. Ruins, therefore, were still an integral part of the settlement, not only for extracting building material but temporal shelter and meeting places that affected people's actions. Despite all efforts, the site was abandoned after 1500 years of occupation. The memory of the site has been carried on in narratives, reflected in settlements with comparable buildings, T-shaped pillars and similar iconography continuing to exist in the vicinity of Göbekli Tepe. Today, 10.000 years later, Göbekli Tepe is re-occupied by local farmers, politicians, archaeologists, and tourists who appropriate the site in their own way – agriculturally, scientifically, politically, and pop-culturally.

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Introduction

A departure…

> *'It was a grey and dark morning. The sun described a pale and weak circle on the greyish sky over the plain in the south. Cold winds were rushing down from the Taurus Mountains to the north. The last clouds were still lingering on the edges of the plateau. The rain last night was heavy. The surface on the slopes was slippery. One could hear the goats and sheep making sounds in disbelief of being forced out of the shelters and wind breaker to move on to the plateau and downwards towards the plain. The shepherd packed up his little belongings; shivering. A knife, the coat made of sheep fur that had kept him warm and dry; the provisions he had left went into his small bag as did his wooden cup. He put out the fire, covered the pit with some dirt and stepped out of the shelter. He had stayed here out of the wind behind the walls of an ancient ruin, almost on top of the hill. The shed had been built quickly some time ago with additional stones, branches of a tree and some shrubs piled upon it. It was good enough to stay a night or two. The view from here could be breathtaking on a clear day, but not today. He stepped out on the rubble-stone surface with some chipped stones embedded from a long-gone period. He looked out, called the dogs and started to follow the flock of sheep and goats northwards. He followed the mountain ridge with his animals; he did not turn around for a last look. He would return in the autumn. He thought. He never did…'*

Abandoned?

Since the inscription of the Neolithic site of Göbekli Tepe on the UNESCO World Heritage List in June 2018, an average of between 1,000 and 2,000 people visit the site daily. They follow the established path to the shelter, constructed in 2017–2018, to view the excavation areas and the Neolithic remains inside (Figure 8.1). They follow their guides; they meet guards, museum officials, sometimes archaeologists working there, and local villagers who are still tending the olive trees they planted before they were compensated for the land by the state. As archaeologists, however, we wonder how to describe the site. When excavations began almost 30 years ago, in 1995, the site was used intensively for agriculture by the local community of nearby village of Örencik, formerly known as *Karaharabe*, and occasionally by people visiting the wishing tree at the top of the hill. Today, with thousands of visitors and 24/7 staff, can the site still be considered abandoned?

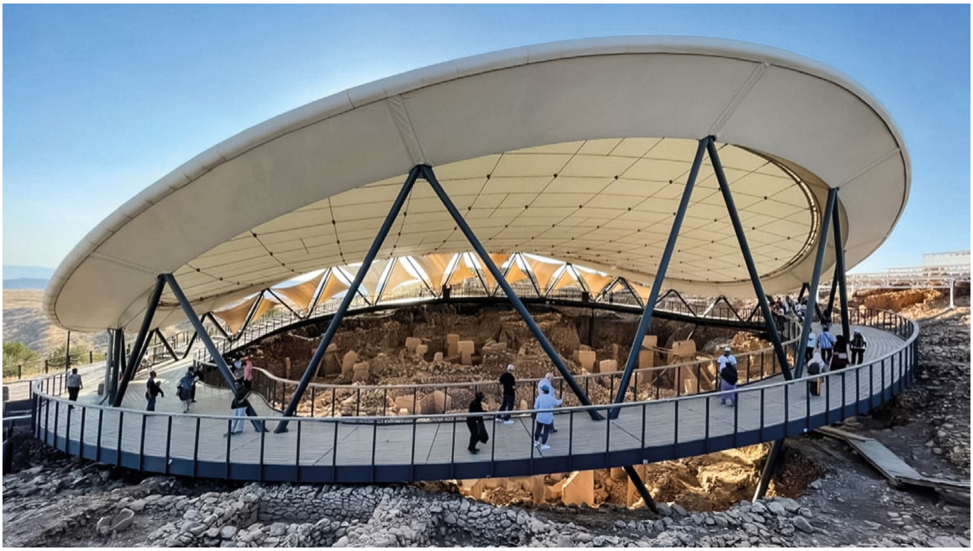
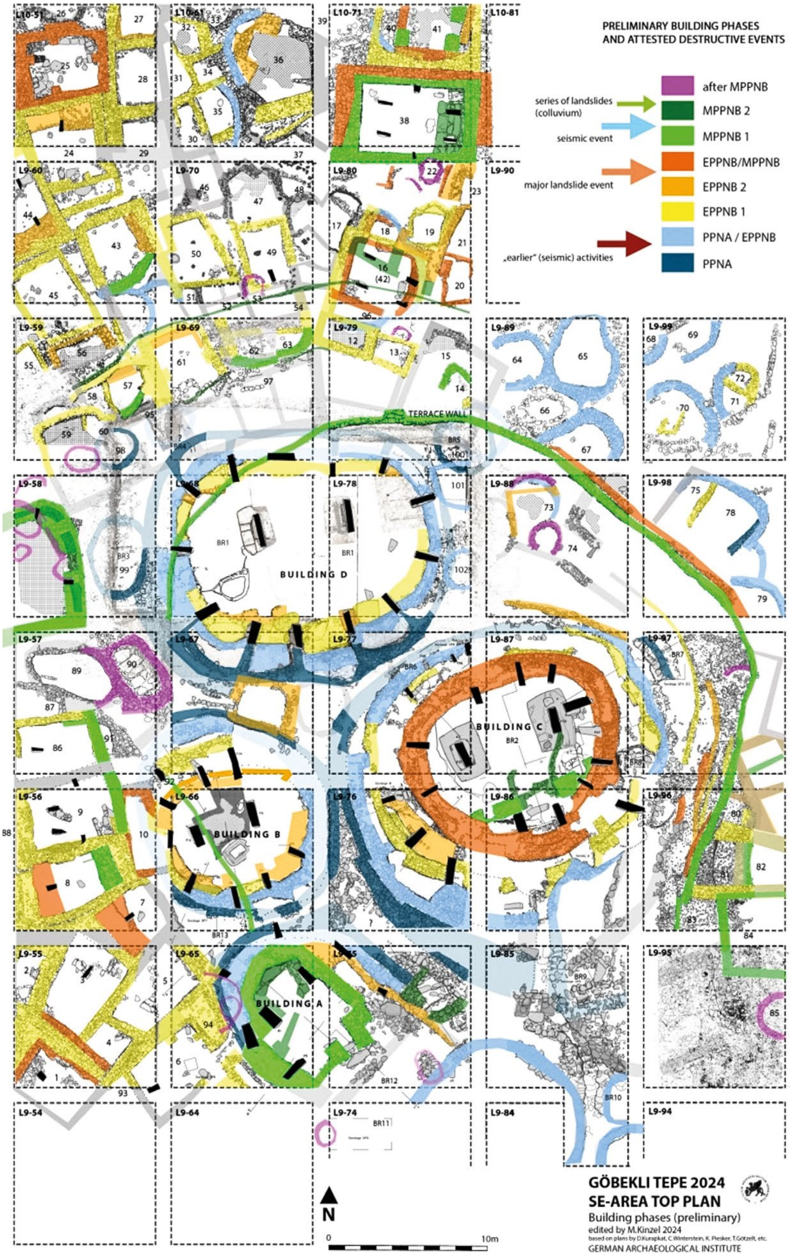


Fig 8.1 The walkway around the main excavation area under the shelter with tourists. Photo: Moritz Kinzel/DAI.

Certainly, there is no longer a settlement and there has not been one for about 9,000 years, or at least that is what the archaeological record suggests at first sight. According to Klaus Schmidt, who directed the excavations until his death in 2014, the stratigraphy at the site is characterised by three layers (Schmidt 2006): Layer 1 is the modern ploughing horizon with mixed and displaced artefacts, mainly from the Neolithic; Layer 2 shows the remains of Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (PPNB); and Layer 3 contains the remains of Pre-Pottery Neolithic A (PPNA) buildings and finds. According to Schmidt, most of the structures found at Göbekli Tepe should be regarded as ritual-communal structures – sometimes referred to as the 'first temple' of mankind (Schmidt 2006). It has been suggested that these buildings were filled in the context of lavish feasts and festivities (e.g. Özdoğan and Özdoğan 1998; Schmidt 1998; Dietrich and Notroff 2015; Dietrich et al. 2017; Karul 2021, 2022). However, recent interdisciplinary studies show that, on the one hand, the smaller structures surrounding the special buildings have a clear domestic character and, on the other hand, the stratigraphy is not only vertical but also highly complex with horizontal features (Figure 8.2); this indicates the impact of severe destructive natural events followed by human interactions with regard to repair and maintenance (Kinzel and Clare 2020; Breuers and Kinzel 2022; Kinzel 2024a, 2024c, 2024d; Schönicke 2018, 2022, 2025; Pöllath et al. in prep.).


PRELIMINARY BUILDING PHASES
AND ATTESTED DESTRUCTIVE EVENTS
series of landslides (colluvium)
seismic event
major landslide event
„earlier" (seismic) activities
after MPPNB
MPPNB 2
MPPNB 1
EPPNB/MPPNB
EPPNB 2
EPPNB 1
PPNA / EPPNB
PPNA
L10-51
L10-61
L10-71
L10-81
L9-60
L9-70
L9-80
L9-90
L9-59
L9-69
L9-79
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TERRACE WALL
BUILDING D
BUILDING C
BUILDING B
BUILDING A
BR1
BR2
BR3
BR5
BR6
BR7
BR8
BR9
BR10
BR11
BR12
BR13
N
0
10m
GÖBEKLI TEPE 2024
SE-AREA TOP PLAN
Building phases (preliminary)
edited by M.Kinzel 2024
based on plans by D.Kurapkat, C.Winterstein, K. Piesker, T.Götzelt, etc.
GERMAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

Fig 8.2 Göbekli Tepe phasing plan after Kinzel 2024.

Over 1,500 years of resilience

All of the buildings at Göbekli Tepe show evidence of a long period of use and a series of modifications. The first activities can be dated to the PPNA (c. 9400–8800 cal BCE) and were recorded mainly in the deep soundings excavated for the foundations of the new shelters, both in the south-eastern and north-western areas. The early phases at Göbekli Tepe are characterised by round house structures 2 to 5 metres in diameter. It seems that around the same time the first communal (monumental) structures – architecturally 'special buildings' – were built on the same rock formations. In fact, the settlement was repeatedly hit by destructive events, which the inhabitants responded to according to their possibilities and resources. At one point, there seems to have been a lack of hands available to clear the buildings of landslide debris. In later phases there is a slow shift towards rectangular structures. In several cases, these rectangular structures were not really built on top of the round structures but built into them, partially incorporating the earlier walls.

Traces of destructive events can be observed everywhere. Almost all T-shaped pillars show damage (Figure 8.3, plates 1.4, 1.5); almost all portal stones are fragmented (Kinzel 2024a; Waszk in prep.). In the last identifiable building phases, the structures contain up to 80% reused building materials, including mortar material and wall stones (Schönicke 2025). This is no coincidence. Over time, the buildings themselves, or more precisely their ruins, become the primary source of building materials. This was particularly true for the Middle Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (MPPNB, ca. 8200–7500 cal BCE) occupation at the site (Kinzel et al. 2021; Kinzel, Duru, et al. 2021; Schönicke 2018; 2022; 2025). In the context of such a densely populated settlement, some basic questions arise: Who was responsible for maintaining the buildings, especially the roofs? Who was responsible for different tasks? What was the state of the buildings when they were finally abandoned? What factors might have played a role in the different Neolithic approaches to dealing with ruins? Was there a lack of people/labour to produce and transport new stone-made building elements or to undo the destruction of buildings? Who decided which materials were extracted from ruins, and was it possible for everyone in the village to do so?

At Göbekli Tepe, steep-slope architecture lies to the west, north and east of the special buildings in the south-eastern area, providing unique insights into the interaction between people and monuments at the site (Kinzel 2023, 2024c). The findings in these structures can also be seen in other areas of the site. In general, all structures show a series of alterations and renovations. These can be clearly linked to the instability of the slope and recurrent landslide events (Pöllath et al. in prep.), or to ongoing erosion processes and seismic activity (Kinzel 2024c, 2024d), resulting in rebuilt walls, raised floors, and stone troughs that were initially placed on the floor surface but now serve as ‘pit’ features. Some of these vessels have been repaired and reused in the floor, for example in rooms L09-95-84 and L09-59-59/60. The lime plaster floors are re-established with a difference in height of 20 to 40 cm, in some cases with clear collapse material resting on the former floor surface (Figure 8.3, plates 1.1 and 1.2).

The Neolithic community at Göbekli Tepe shows a high degree of resilience to the impact of natural disasters. Their ability to withstand and quickly recover from the difficulties involved is clearly evident in the immediate human response after each destructive event. The level of response depended on the number of people on hand. One observes: 1) ad hoc repair of damaged buildings to ensure the usability of domestic spaces, 2) demolition of damaged parts of buildings to ensure safety and stability, including clearing and debris removal to re-establish structures, 3) stabilisation activities, including the construction of terrace walls and the establishment of stable fist-sized stone layers on slopes (Figure 8.3, plate 1.3, 1.4) rebuilding of damaged community structures, in some cases with revised designs and in a different location, and 5) a corresponding restructuring of settlement patterns.

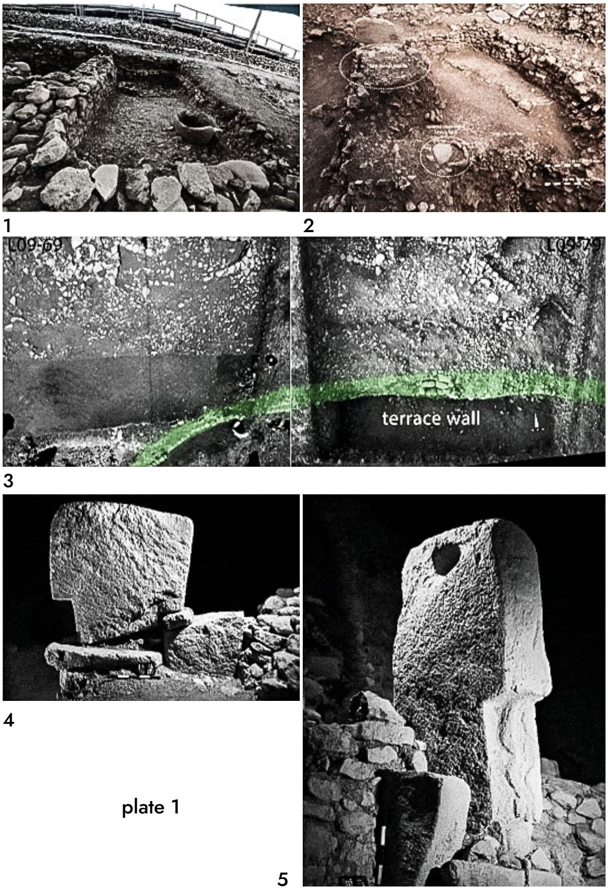

Fig 8.3
plate 1.1 Göbekli Tepe, L09-96-space 84 east of Building C.:with stone vessel and later floor surface visible in section (Photo: DAI-IST, M. Kinzel).;
1.2 Göbekli Tepe, L09-59-space 59/60 northwest of Building D with stone vessel and built up floors (Photo: DAI-IST, M. Kinzel);
1.3 Göbekli Tepe, Terrace wall running around Buildings C and D, resting on a stabilised surface made og fist-sized stone rubble (Photo: DAI-IST/OA, K. Schmidt 2001/2006, edited M. Kinzel, 2024);
1.4 & 5 Göbekli Tepe, broken T-shaped Pillars (P19 & P30) in Building D (Photos: DAI-IST, Benny Waszk/Moritz Kinzel 2022).

Relocating people – relocating materials

Did the people[1] dwell in the ruins while they repaired them, or did they move to less damaged parts of the settlement? Were there indeed less damaged areas? What happened to the inhabitants of destroyed buildings? When people moved away, did they take with them T-shaped pillars and fragments of building elements that were associated with their group?[2] Were some areas of the site abandoned? Were some parts abandoned for good, or were they reoccupied after a while? It is difficult to tell whether the inhabitants perceived the reused material simply as building material or as purposeful reuse in the sense of spolia. As some pieces were placed in a meaningful order, it can be assumed that at least in some cases the reliefs still had a meaning and were part of a commonly known narrative. In other cases, such as the reuse of fragments in masonry, it is possible that the material was not valued primarily for symbolic reasons.[3]

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[1] Only limited information regarding the people living at Göbekli Tepe is available. So far, only three burials with approximately five individuals have been uncovered. While human bones are abundant in the deposits accumulated in the building interiors, the degree of fragmentation is high (for further insights see Gresky et al. 2017).

[2] When working on an excavation we regularly remove and re-locate finds, e.g. sculptures, ground stone tools, etc. from the site into the storage and to the museums, etc. We move them out of context, destroying somehow the information and connection of object and place. Sometimes the decision to leave an object *in situ* or to lift it up is a very spontaneous one; merely a feeling and rarely a rational decision. It leads straight to a discussion about heritage narratives and perceptions.

[3] Not only the knowledge about the meaning of the symbols and narratives got lost; actually the knowledge about the site got lost, too. In the context of heritage narratives, devastation and destruction events can also be the creator of strong shared memories. On the other hand, knowledge and with the people all can get lost; see Kinzel 2025; et al. 2019 and Bevan 2007.

A methodology for identifying repair, reuse, and ruin interactions at Göbekli Tepe

In several areas of the settlement, processes of destruction, repair, dislocation, and ruin interactions are clearly visible. The term ruin interactions was explicitly chosen to illustrate the reciprocal effects between people and ruins. Small-scale *archaeotectural* studies of buildings[4] and analyses of room fills have been undertaken to investigate these events in detail. Apart from the prominent special buildings, much less is known about the dense rectangular architecture at Göbekli Tepe. These structures also provide evidence of long biographies, reflecting practices of intensive reuse and maintenance.

A small-scale methodology was developed to identify reuse at Göbekli Tepe, which is both an integral part of Neolithic building practice at the site and indirect evidence for destructive events and interactions with ruins (Schönicke 2025; for preliminary results see Schönicke 2022). Five types of reused materials were identified: 1) intentionally placed spolia, 2) ground stone tool fragments, 3) reused wall stones, 4) small wedge stones, and 5) microdebris in plastic materials such as plaster and mortar. For contextual comparison, these elements were mapped in 1 x 1 m squares in several walls of the structures. First, all elements within one square metre were counted. The next step was to count all elements that could be assigned to types 1 to 3. The percentages of each category were determined and finally combined for statistical evaluation. The total number of wall stones within each square metre was used to indicate the degree of fragmentation of the building material. The greater the fragmentation, the more likely the material had come from secondary or tertiary contexts. In addition, small wedge stones were counted separately as they do not represent 'proper' wall stones but were incorporated into the walls where necessary (e.g. to fill voids within irregularly laid wall courses). Inclusions of plastic materials such as chipped stone, bone and charcoal were recorded. While the Neolithic builders may have been more deliberate in their selection of materials for Types 1 to 3, Types 4 and 5 are likely to have been collected incidentally.

Direct evidence of ruin interactions is made visible by microarchaeological studies of room fills. Fill deposits are the most under-represented contexts in documentation and publication because, unlike architecture or objects, they seem to lack all the 'spectacular' and visual archaeological characteristics. As a result, these deposits are often excavated without much care, sometimes even very quickly, in order to finally reveal the architecture they cover, even though they are an extremely valuable source for a variety of microarchaeological analyses (Weiner 2010; Love 2013; Barański et al. 2021; Lorenzon 2023; Öğüt and Antolin 2023; Uzdurum et al. 2023a, 2023b). For many years, this was also the case at Göbekli Tepe. The hypothesis of deliberate backfilling was put forward soon after the discovery of the special buildings (conceptualised as ritual burials; Schmidt 1998; Özdoğan and Özdoğan 1998; Özdoğan 2018), and consequently there was no further discussion or study of the filling processes. Recent studies of the topography of the site have shed new light on the filling of the structures, as they have revealed the dynamic relocation of settlement layers due to destructive events such as landslides and earthquakes (Clare 2020; Kinzel et al. 2021; Breuers and Kinzel 2022; Kinzel 2024; Pöllath et al. in prep).

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[4] Bauforschung or *archeotecture* is the study of architecture with archaeological methods (see e.g. Arnold 2023).

Even though many buildings have already been completely excavated without published data on the fills, the reprocessing of old excavation data (field diaries, locus and contextual inventories, photographs and drawings) in combination with new excavations (partly of sediment blocks left in the structures for stabilisation on site) revealed multi-phased processes of abandonment, reoccupation, activity areas and natural events in the ruins (Schönicke 2022, Tab. 1; Schönicke 2025). The individual phases are in turn visualised through a sequence of events (Klinkenberg 2016) that includes construction phases, abandonment processes (disengagement practices, ruin interactions and decay processes) and modern interactions, which we might call the 'Anthropocene horizon'. This creates a comprehensive biography of the building, which allows comparison between sites to assess whether structures were abandoned in similar or different ways, and how Neolithic people interacted with the ruins.

Case studies: Space 16 and Building D

Case studies of space 16 and building D are presented here to highlight the coping strategies developed by the Neolithic in light of the periodic destruction of their built environment by natural disasters. This is reconstructed by the systematic mapping of reused materials and traces of repair in the buildings and by documenting interaction with ruins through the fill of the structures.

Fragments of memory

Space 16 is the lower part of a rectangular two-storey building with at least four rooms. Here, an initial oval structure was rebuilt into a rectangular one with at least four building phases (Kinzel and Clare 2020; Schönicke 2022, 223). After the incomplete excavation in space 16 (Schmidt 2002), a new research programme was initiated in the same area after 2017. Here, small-scale studies of the building archaeology (Kinzel et al. 2020; Kinzel 2021), mapping of reused materials and study of the room fills including geochemical sediment analyses using ICP-OES (Schönicke 2022; 2025), phytolith analysis (Öğüt et al. in prep.), and studies of the chipped stone assemblage (Breuers 2022; Breures and Kinzel 2022) were carried out. This discussion presents a comprehensive overview of the reused building materials as well as an evaluation of the room fill that complements preliminary results published elsewhere (Schönicke 2022).

Similar to other structures, the inner space of this room was gradually reduced by constructing new walls in front of the inner wall face. Hence, the mapping of reused building materials can only be conducted for the inner wall faces of the youngest building phase. Taking all four mapped squares of space 16 into consideration, differences and similarities regarding the Neolithic building practice were shown (Figure 8.4). The southern wall Loc. L09-80-43 has the lowest degree of fragmentation (53 wall stones per m^2) whereas the fragmentation is almost twice as high in the southern wall Loc. 63 (n=97). In all mapped squares, more than half of the building material is reused. The highest amount is traceable in the eastern wall Loc. L09-80-44 (68.3%), whereas the southern and northern wall have about 50%. The variance concerning the types of reused elements is high. The amount of large-sized spolia is highest in the southern wall Loc. L09-80-43, which correlates with the low degree of fragmentation. The integration of four stone vessels vertically aligned in western wall Loc. L09-80-65 is striking (14.1%). This is most likely an intentional placing as ground stone tool fragments are almost absent in the other parts of the walls. Reused wall stones occur frequently (40.4–54.0%) which indicates that people extracted them from ruins frequently. Altogether, over half of the materials in space 16 were reused (56.8%). In all the walls of space 16 that were examined, the mortar contains pieces of chipped stone, bone, grit, and small limestones. This proves reuse even on the smallest scale detectable so far. On average, one square metre in Space 16 contained 64.8 wall stones which reflects a high degree of fragmentation of the building material.

The pressure of the northern slope, where the architecture with space 16 was located, was a constant threat to building D in the southeast hollow. This depression, surrounded by steep slope architecture, functioned as a sediment trap, meaning that the dislocated deposits cannot be washed out by erosional processes. This makes the fill of building D (and the others in the hollows of the settlement area, accordingly) important contexts for studying site formation and dislocation of settlement layers at Göbekli Tepe. According to building archaeological studies and ^{14}C dates, Building D was in use from the EPPNA to the mid-9th millennium cal BCE (Kinzel and Clare 2020). In its biography, the building saw at least four phases of rebuilding, modification and repair that reflect the periodic destruction of the structure by slope slide events. The outstanding size of the building (approx. 15 meters in diameter) as well its elaborate interior equipped with up to 5.5 m high monolithic pillars suggests that it had a special meaning to the inhabitants. If so, its destruction would have been a decisive and likely traumatising event for them. Also, the people who inhabited the collapsed buildings lost their homes and had to find accommodation elsewhere until the repairs had been finished. Hence, the slope slide events caused by heavy rainfall and/or earthquakes forced the people to think carefully about planning and related social consequences.

In the latest phase of Building D, reused materials are most visible in large monolithic pillar fragments that have either been rearranged within the structure or were recycled as benches or even fully integrated into the walls in horizontal positions. But the inner wall face of the building has been repaired with reused materials as well. As 14C samples from both the western and eastern half of the wall mortar have demonstrated (Kinzel and Clare 2020), the two sides were not repaired at the same time. The eastern half dates to the LPPNA, the western half to the EPPNB. Therefore, the two sides are discussed separately. As in Space 16, reused materials were mapped systematically in one square metre per wall segment.

In the eastern half – the earlier phase of repair – three squares in wall segments between P19 and P20, P20 and P21, as well as P21 and P22 were examined (Figure 8.4). In total, 101 wall stones were counted. Here, the proportion of reused materials sums up to 48.5% (n=49). Spolia were used very frequently (n=18; 17.8%). In contrast, no artefacts reused as wall stones were documented. Almost half of the wall stones have been reused (n=49; 48.5%). Small wedge stones occur in moderate quantities (n=43). On average, one square metre contains 33.7 wall stones.

In the western half, three squares were mapped that contained 82 wall stones in total (wall segments between P38 and P41, P41 and P42, as well as P42 and P43; Figure 8.4). In this later phase of repair, 43.9% of the building material has been reused. The proportion of spolia is slightly lower than in the eastern half (n=11; 13.4%;) whereas artefacts such as ground stone tools occur occasionally (n=4; 4.9%). Reused wall stones are used frequently (n=21; 25.6%) and small wedge stones even very frequently (n=111). The degree of fragmentation of the building material is lower than in the older phase and sums up to 27.3 wall stones on average.

Comparison

This analysis calls into question the assumption that fragmentation should increase in the younger phases due to the accumulation of disruptive events. However, the fragmentation in Building D is only half as high as in the latest phase space 16 (Figure 8.4). On the one hand, this indicates that the degree of fragmentation increased drastically from the EPPNB to the MPPNB. On the other hand, the people might have used ‘better’ (less fragmented) materials for the special buildings. The use of spolia is higher in Building D than in Space 16, yet they were integrated systematically in specific positions and reused as benches or socketed to create ‘new’ pillars. This indicates intentional placing. The overall use of ground stone objects as wall stones is significantly higher in Space 16. Intentional positioning of several objects was also recorded there. Incidental practices are reflected in reused wall stones and small wedge stones that were used unsystematically in all the walls analysed.

In general, reuse, recycling, and even ‘upcycling’ were common practices in Göbekli Tepe[5]. The classification and quantification of the reused materials indicates that some were used deliberately (such as pillar fragments) while others seem to reflect incidental use (Pollock et al. 2020). The repetitive placing of pillar fragments e.g., as upcycled benches or in other built-in-features (e.g. niches and shelves) makes them diachronic and symbolic markers and carriers of memory. But not all practices should be labelled as intentional. Daily routines are often carried out unquestioned and parts of the rebuilding process such as the collection of stones in ruins or sediments mixed with microdebris for the reconstruction of the walls might have been as well. But altogether, it appears that the inhabitants of Göbekli Tepe did not favour using ‘new’ building materials. This could have been for practical reasons such as the affordance of the material (flat and elongated pillar fragment suitable as bench; see Gibson 2015) or saving labour. In Neolithic Göbekli Tepe, this can be addressed as a cultural technique that developed over centuries in both daily and other, possible ritual contexts.[6] In addition, the intense reuse also implies constant reproduction of the site by its builders, carrying on memory and knowledge over time.

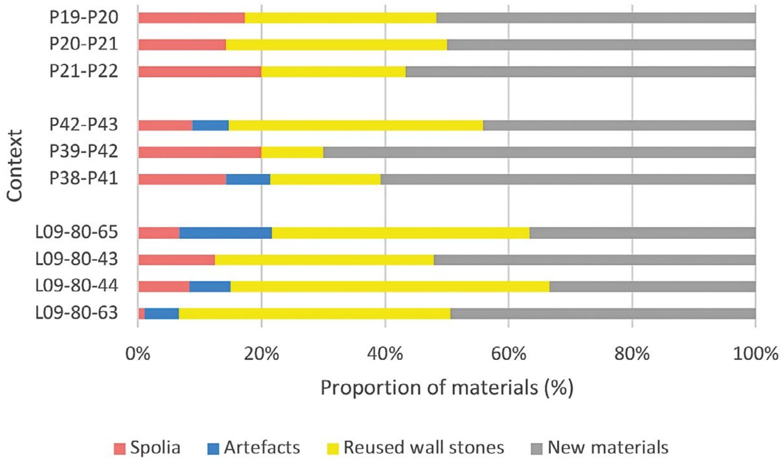

Fig 8.4 Proportions of reused and new materials in walls of Building D and Space 16. © J. Schönicke

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[5] In this context, we understand ‘upcycling’ as the re-use of parts of an earlier artefact giving it a new meaning with a different function (see e.g. Stockhammer 2020).

[6] Cultural techniques or ‘Kulturtechniken’ involve the ways in which both discursive and embodied knowledge is applied on materiality such as structures and objects through everyday, routinised practices and gestures (see Pollock et al. 2011, 172, following Ingold 1987 and Dobres 2000).

Living ruins, not buried buildings: room 0 internal stratigraphy

At a certain point, the buildings were no longer maintained, people moved away from the site (Lamoureux-St-Hilaire and Macrae 2020) and the structures were abandoned. The room-internal stratigraphies reveal dynamic alternating processes of decay and post-abandonment interactions with the ruins (Schönicke 2022), as shown by the analysis of room fills from Room 16 (Figure 8.5) and Building D (Figure 8.6, Plate 2; Figure 8.7).

Space 16

The low quantities of finds on the floor in Space 16 indicate that the inhabitants left in a planned manner and may even have cleaned the room before they left. In one of the pits (Loc. L09-80-133) that were cut into the lime plaster floor[7] (Loc. L09-80-122), a ground stone tool was deposited (GT17_WS_0251), whereas another one was placed behind the bench (Loc. L09-80-70). This might have been deposited intentionally, as the objects are too large to be overlooked. Objects that have been left behind intentionally in abandoned rooms are also documented in other structures at Göbekli Tepe (Schönicke 2025). After the abandonment, the room was used as a midden area and a trampled surface was recorded on roof collapse. Due to the steep slope to the North, it seems likely that the room fill originates from higher-lying collapsed buildings. This is indicated by settlement debris in the fill as well as lime plaster floor fragments. In a later phase, a terracing wall Loc. L09-80-9 was erected on top of the completely filled structure as a response to the constant slope pressure that endangered the buildings to the north that were still inhabited.

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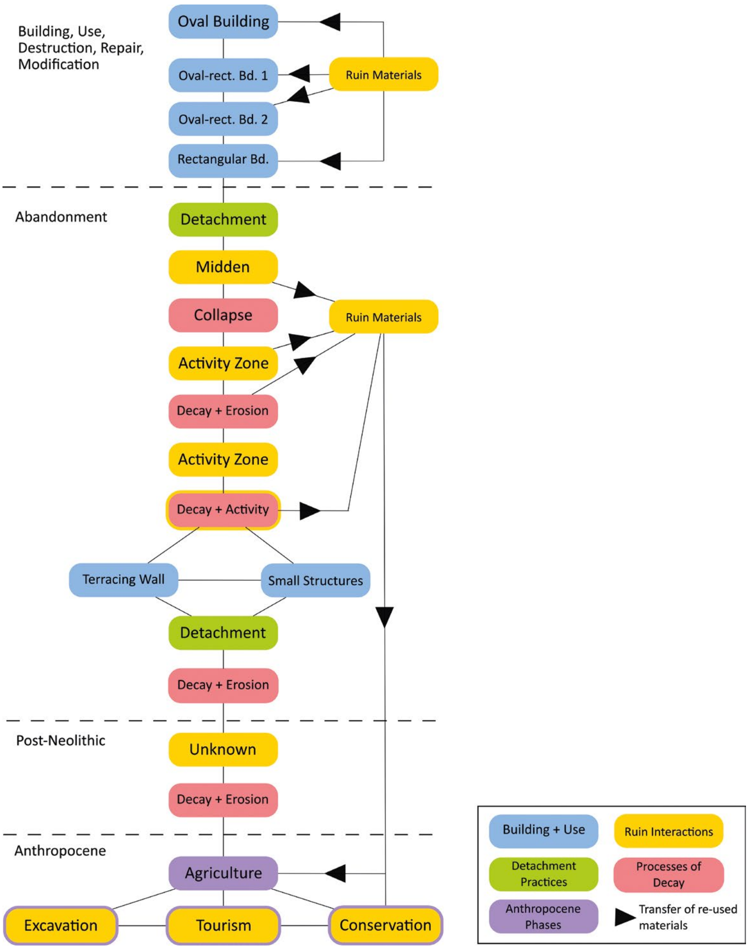
[7] The lime plaster floors at Göbekli Tepe show a high variety in quality (Sobott 2018, 2020). Partially the lime burning technology seems to be not fully developed. Only a limited number of PPNA and PPNB plaster floors are analysed so far. Not all are lime plaster floors. For comparison with contemporary floors at e.g., Nevalı Çori see Affonso 1997; Hauptmann and Yalçın 2000; Affonso and Pernicka 2001; as well for a wider regional context Kaliszan 1998; Kaliszan 2010.


Building, Use, Destruction, Repair, Modification
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Rectangular Bd.
Ruin Materials
Abandonment
Detachment
Midden
Collapse
Ruin Materials
Activity Zone
Decay + Erosion
Activity Zone
Decay + Activity
Terracing Wall
Small Structures
Detachment
Decay + Erosion
Post-Neolithic
Unknown
Decay + Erosion
Anthropocene
Agriculture
Excavation
Tourism
Conservation
Building + Use
Ruin Interactions
Detachment Practices
Processes of Decay
Anthropocene Phases
Transfer of re-used materials

Fig 8.5
Göbekli Tepe, L09-80, Biography of space 16 visualised by a sequence of events. © J. Schönicke

Building D

In Building D, the findings point to a disruptive event that led to the abandonment of the structure. Hence, no detachment phase is noted in the sequence of events, but a disruption followed by abandonment because the people were not able to leave the building in a planned manner. The collapse layer Loc. L09-78-107 consists of sediment mixed with rubble directly above the floor. In collapsed position, a large relief plate C41 is lying upside down in the deposit indicating that it was formerly placed in the building or has been reused as a spolia (Figure 8.6, plate 2.1).[8] Besides, the fill material contained several pieces of human crania that might derive from a burial that was originally in one of the buildings at the slope (Schönicke 2025; for burials and human remains in Göbekli Tepe see Clare 2020; Gresky et al. 2017). It can be tentatively assumed that it might have been traumatizing for the people to lose the mortal remains of other group members, be it friends, relatives, or other members of the community, to destructive events.

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[8] The fragment has been interpreted elsewhere (Becker et al. 2012, 28; L. Dietrich et al. 2019; L. Dietrich 2021, 8) as intentional deposit associated with ritual burying the structure at the end of its use phase. The collapse position however clearly points towards dislocation through a disruptive event.

Trampled surfaces post-dating the destruction of Building D suggest people frequented the ruin. Some people might have stayed for some time as indicated by smaller pits containing ash and charcoal that could be interpreted as temporary fireplaces (e.g. Loc. L09-78-2023-023/024). In the southwest, that is not directly affected by the destruction, an ash lens with charcoal interpreted as an ad hoc fireplace was documented approx. 15 cm above the floor in Loc. L9-68-325.7 close to Pillar P38. Another ash lens (Loc. L9-78-118) was located southeast of P18 approx. 20 cm above floor level in Loc. L9-78-112.2. In the vicinity, a flat oval stone plate, a decorated bone fragment, a perforated shell of a snail, and a perforated bone pendant were found. Also, three axes made of jadeite were found, including one in association with a piece of crystal rock and numerous fragments of human crania. Together with high concentrations of animal bone and chipped stone, these finds suggest that people continued to dwell in the ruin, prepared and consumed food and maybe even produced tools while the stone plate was used as a working table. The human bone fragments might originate from dislocated burials. It might also be possible that people brought the fragments into the ruin to modify them, as attested for other fragments of crania in Göbekli Tepe (see Gresky et al. 2017).

East of the central pillar P31, two anthropomorphic heads made of limestone were intentionally deposited (Figure 8.6, plate 2.2; see also Becker et al. 2012, 28). The sculptures were recorded in an upright position close to the shaft of the pillar approx. 80 to 100 cm above the pillar base on top of the collapse of the northern wall (in Loc. L9-68-785.1). At this point, people may have decided not to repair the building again, but to leave it as a ruin within the settlement. In time, more and more material filled the ruin through erosional and aeolian processes and the decay of the structure proceeded. Parts of the roof collapsed successively (roof collapse Loc. L9-78-35.2), which is indicated by several fragments of lime plaster (parts of the former roof cover, Loc. L9-78-54; see Kurapkat 2012) as well as compact, loamy to silty deposits with lime and angular stones. A large trapezoid stone plate with perforation (Loc. L9-78-52) baked into lime plaster (Loc. L9-78-55) is located in horizontal position on top of the collapse that might originate from an activity area on the roof (Figure 8.6, plate 2.3). The perforation in the plate could have held a wooden beam to create e.g., a sunshade (in connection with plant materials).

As the ruin of Building D was only overbuilt partially in the later phases and most of the pillar heads were still visible, the inhabitants might have created a memory space (Nora 1989, Tuan 2001) that was accessible through a staircase in the terrace wall Loc. L9-68-3) of the northern slope (Schmidt 2010). The terrace wall, in turn, protected the buildings on the slope from collapse.

However, at a certain point in time, the pressure of the northern slope became so severe that the higher lying structures collapsed into the ruin of Building D, covering the terrace wall and the pillar heads. These landslide events are clearly visible in section by alternating bands of rubble and sediment typical for grain-size separation in debris flows (Figure 8.6, plate 2.4; see e.g., Blijenberg 2007; Zhou et al. 2013; Sohn et al. 2002) mixed with settlement debris (animal bone, human remains, chipped stone, ground stone tool fragments, collapsed wall stones, lime plaster floor fragments, etc.). This demonstrates the immense dynamics in the dislocation of settlement deposits that the inhabitants had to deal with on a regular basis.

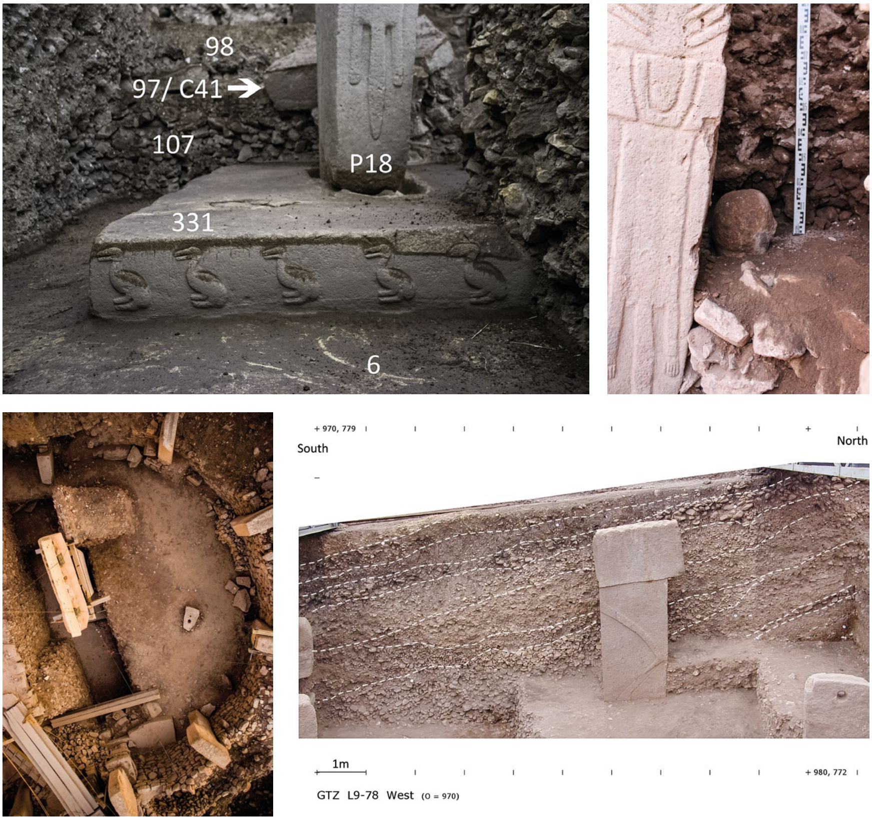

Fig 8.6 **plate 2.1** Collapse layer Loc. L09-78-107 above floor in Building D. The relief fragment is visible behind pillar P18. Photo: Göbekli Tepe Project, modified by J. Schönicke.; **2.2.** Anthropomorphic head in the fill. Photo: Göbekli Tepe Project; **2.3.** Perforated stone plate on roof collapse. Photo: Klaus Schmidt/DAI.; **2.4.** Western section of area L09-78 with grain size separation in debris flow. © Göbekli Tepe Project.

After building D was completely filled, other areas of the settlement were still inhabited. However, in the second half of the 9th millennium BCE, the last people detached from place.[9] The reasons for the abandonment of Göbekli Tepe are not fully understood. Perhaps it became too difficult to maintain the site, or perhaps the barren limestone plateau was unsuitable for newly developing subsistence practices such as agriculture. But these questions must remain unanswered for now. There are few traces of anthropogenic interaction at Göbekli Tepe over the next few millennia. Reconstructing the final abandonment of Göbekli Tepe is made difficult by the powerful erosion processes that have severely affected the uppermost layers of the settlement and successively dislocated them towards the Harran plain (Nykamp et al. 2021).

In sub recent times, the surface of the site was intensively used for agriculture, as the anthropogenic layers were quite fertile compared to those of the surrounding area (Tarık Yıldız, pers. com.; phosphate levels in the settlement layers are high compared to those off-site; see Schönicke 2022; Schönicke 2025). With the beginning of excavations at Göbekli Tepe, agricultural activities were gradually discontinued and the site was subsequently opened to the public.

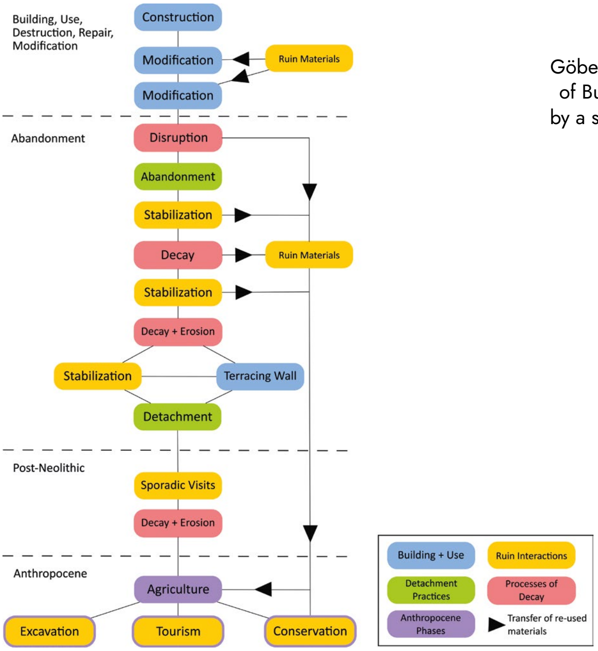
Building, Use, Destruction, Repair, Modification
Construction
Modification
Ruin Materials
Modification
Abandonment
Disruption
Abandonment
Stabilization
Decay
Ruin Materials
Stabilization
Decay + Erosion
Stabilization
Terracing Wall
Detachment
Post-Neolithic
Sporadic Visits
Decay + Erosion
Anthropocene
Agriculture
Excavation
Tourism
Conservation
Building + Use
Ruin Interactions
Detachment Practices
Processes of Decay
Anthropocene Phases
Transfer of re-used materials

Fig 8.7
Göbekli Tepe, Biography of Building D visualised by a sequence of events.
© J. Schönicke

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[9] For the concept of 'detachment from place' as a more social approach in abandonment studies, see Schönicke 2022, 214–215 with regard to Lamoureux-St-Hilaire and Macrae 2020. It implies people-place disentanglements and related, complex decisions that evolve once people leave; hence, it goes beyond the material-based archaeological analyses of formation processes.

The Anthropocene dimensions

Interactions with the ruins of Göbekli Tepe are not limited to the Neolithic, but the impact of past and present activities on the future appearance of a site is often difficult to grasp and rarely studied systematically (see e.g. Pétursdóttir 2017, Mytum and Meek 2021). In particular, apparently minor contemporary inventions can leave traces that will be recognisable for hundreds of years to come. A systematic survey has recently been undertaken to better understand the impact of recent and contemporary activities at the site, including agriculture, archaeological excavation, conservation and construction processes, and tourism, and their associated assemblages of contemporary objects mainly made of plastics – in other words traces of the Anthropocene (Schönicke 2023; 2025.).[10]

The survey covered the Neolithic mound itself, the surrounding limestone plateau, the access road, and the visitor centre. Contemporary features that significantly shape the present appearance of the site were recorded, including shelters, car parks, work containers, spoil heaps, footpaths and shops. The agricultural remains were also studied, consisting of dry-stone walls and cairns made by collecting surface material (mainly Neolithic wall stones, sculptures and ground stone tools), as well as olive trees planted on the mound.

In addition to documenting the contemporary structures, twelve survey units (up to 100m^2) were defined to document, collect and record objects related to these recent and contemporary activities. Around the GT1 shelter and the visitor centre, finds related to tourism (e.g. plastic bottles, plastic wrapping of drinking straws, etc.) predominated, whereas under the GT2 shelter, the majority of materials were related to the construction of the shelter (e.g. screws, welding needles, etc.; Figure 8.8). The finds near the excavation team's office containers were typically related to archaeological and conservation work (e.g. broken measuring tapes, pencils, plastic bags, fragmented sieves, etc.). A total of 991 objects were recorded, with plastic being the dominant material in almost all units examined. Single-use plastics from drinks and ready meals made up a particularly large proportion of the material (Schönicke 2023, Fig. 10). In the near future, plastic will degrade into micro- and nanoplastics and will inevitably intermingle with the Neolithic layers (Peller et al. 2022).

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[10] For discussion of the term ‘Anthropocene’, see Gibbard et al. 2021, Waters et al. 2022. Nowadays widely distributed not only in Geology (where the establishment as geological epoch has recently been rejected; see Edgeworth et al. 2024), the Anthropocene discourse is visible throughout various disciplines such as philosophy, social and political sciences (see e.g. Haraway 2015; Moore 2017, 2018; Zalasiewicz et al. 2021, 2024). With regard to these debates, the term is applied to reconstruct the contemporary interactions in Göbekli Tepe (Schönicke 2023, 2025.)

What interactions have had a lasting effect on the site? Although agriculture has not left any material traces in the form of objects, the displacement of Neolithic material by the plough and into dry-stone walls has had a severe impact on the uppermost layers. The olive trees will severely disturb the Neolithic layers and may make it impossible to excavate in these areas at all. The work containers and the old 1999 shelter are only on the surface and do not penetrate the ground. In contrast, the new shelters over the SE and NW depressions are fixed to the bedrock, in one case even to the floor of a Neolithic pit (cistern) cut into the bedrock itself (Schönicke 2023, Fig. 2). For their foundations, deep soundings were made into the archaeological layers and then the foundations were drilled into the rock, which will be a permanent marker of our presence. The survey highlighted that although we do our best to excavate and conserve carefully, all excavation is first and foremost destruction. We are leaving clear traces that will have long-term effects, creating a new layer of occupation to be added to the site's biography. This forms the Anthropocene horizon at Göbekli Tepe.

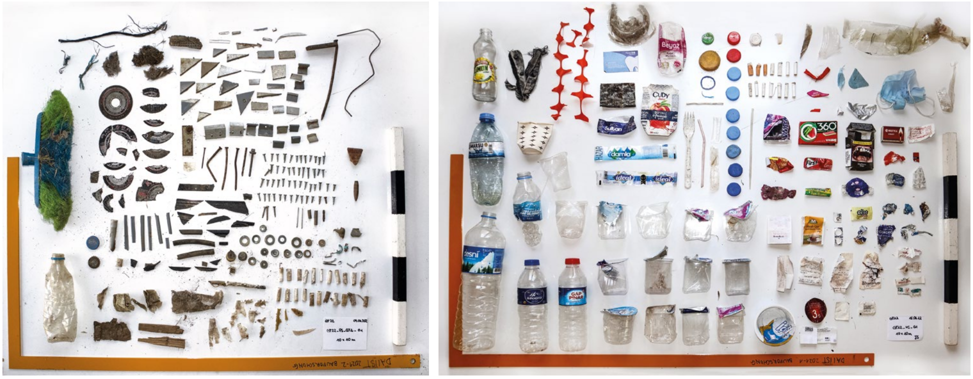

Fig 8.8 Comparison of two surveyed 10 x 10 m units. **8.8a (Left):** Objects related to archaeological and construction works collected below the permanent shelter GT2 (not yet open to the public). **8.8b (Right):** Collection from the visitor centre containing mainly single-use plastic (after Schönicke 2023, fig. 9). Photos: J. Schönicke

The traces left behind? Memorial fragments

In the context of long-lived prehistoric settlements, one question seems to be of considerable importance: Is a site ever actually abandoned? How do we deal with traces of later periods found close to the surface? Can we identify sporadic visits?[11] Is a site like Göbekli Tepe, which is visited by thousands of visitors, a few archaeologists and a few guards (who are there day in and day out), abandoned or still inhabited? We continue to live among the ruins – some perhaps seasonally, others all year round, others just for a day. How should these interactions be interpreted in future archaeological research?[12] In this regard, we should start documenting our present interactions as part of future heritage using the same methods we use for the past (Harrison et al. 2020). We need to understand that any assumptions we make are a product of our time and influenced by our cultural background.

Nevertheless, the ruins were still part of everyday life in the Neolithic settlement of Göbekli Tepe. The reused architectural elements (T-shaped pillar fragments, portal stone fragments and fractured sculptures) were obviously still part of their memorial landscape and mentality, so their use over centuries can be addressed as a cultural technique. The ruins that were not further maintained carried memories and metanarratives of their own (Meier 2023). In our contemporary understanding, they may even have considered them part of their 'cultural heritage'. In addition, the recurrent loss of material culture (over time), explicitly the remains of deceased community members and communal buildings, may have left traumatic gaps in a narrative that was supposed to provide a unifying basis to keep their society in check. Over time, the links to the stories portrayed became more fragmented and in some cases lost. But changing stories is part of keeping traditions alive. And the patterns observed at sites in the Urfa region seem to belong to a common, but over time extremely fragmented, narrative that may have perpetuated at least the memory, if not the actual way of life, of a hunter-gatherer community and its cosmos. This could be seen as a fairly successful strategy for coping with a number of stress factors affecting the Neolithic people at Göbekli Tepe, such as new subsistence strategies and changing social practices.

The role of Göbekli Tepe today is very different. Unlike ancient sites such as Ephesus, Palmyra, Rome or even Stonehenge, which have somehow always been known and visited by travellers over the centuries, Göbekli Tepe was only rediscovered 30 years ago.[13] Since then it has been a media sensation, attracting all kinds of interest (Kinzel 2021).[14] The Neolithic seems far away, even though it lies just below the surface, speaking to us if we are willing to listen. The site has been visited occasionally since the Neolithic, and all these visitors have left their mark. Some of these traces are less visible than others. Some may have simply built a shelter for the night using the stones available on site, with a few additional bushes and a tree trunk, leaving almost no trace to be seen in an archaeological excavation. However, as the shepherd story at the beginning of this contribution shows, we can sometimes pick up these traces. However, it is often difficult to fit these traces into a sequence of events and to relate the findings to such a brief visit. Although we can see the results of time and the processes of erosion involved, we can hardly predict what came next for the short-term visitor. Did he return to the site? Would we be able to recognise the place where he spent the night with his flock? Are we prepared to look for such traces? In contrast, the most recent – Anthropocene – interactions are most visible at the site. It must be our responsibility to minimise the impact of the Anthropocene by measures such as microinvasive excavations, sustainable site management strategies and slow tourism. Our present-day decisions influence what traces we will leave behind at the site once we eventually detach from place.

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[11] Compare with e.g. Cribb 1990

[12] See e.g. Flutsch 2002; Zuccotti 2015

Göbekli Tepe – as discussed above – is in many ways a story of endings and departures. Of course, with the founding of the settlement and its later abandonment, new trajectories were possible, but the full narrative and cosmos of its people disappeared over time. We will never fully understand the cosmos, language and associated narratives of the Neolithic. Our narrative of Neolithic finds and contexts can only be fragmentary.[15] It is a fragmentary memory. Memorial fragments.

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[13] With public recognition of the site even more recent: Schmidt 2006/2012; Netflix production 'Atiye' (English: 'The Gift') 2019–2021.

[14] The site serves more as a projection surface for one's own ideas and wishes than to actually show interest in the findings and what they might tell. For visitors, often the history of discovery is more sensational than the archaeological findings and finds.

[15] For the debate on Neolithic narratives see Godtfredsen and Kinzel 2020; Braun and Schönicke 2021; Kinzel 2024b.

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Biographies

Julia Schönicke received her doctorate in Western Asian Archaeology at the Freie Universität Berlin in 2025. Her dissertation project investigates landscape interactions and abandonment processes as well as the impact of excavations in the Anthropocene at Göbekli Tepe by using microarchaeological methods as well as sociological and political science theories. She is also interested in critical heritage studies and the research field of heritage futures. She conducted field work across Western and Central Asia and Europe. At present, Julia is local field director for geoarchaeology at the Tell Saq Archaeological Project in AlUla/ Saudi-Arabia (DAI and RCU) and lecturer for interdisciplinary archaeological sciences at the University of Zurich.

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9. From Urban Devastation to Creative Destruction:

Disturbance and Urban Life in Later Medieval England

Ben Jervis

Keywords Medieval England; Creative Destruction; Urbanism; 14th Century Crisis; Disturbance

Abstract Urbanisation is a defining characteristic of medieval England, and a process typically understood in terms of economic progress. Whereas the 12th and 13th centuries were periods of urban growth, the later Middle Ages were a time of crisis; climatic change, warfare and pandemic led to the apparent decline and desolation of towns across England. However, whilst towns contracted in size and population, urban life persisted, with urbanity emerging in new ways. This chapter proposes shifting focus from a generalising narrative which moves from urban progress to urban decay and decline, towards exploring how devastation can be a productive force, drawing on the concept of creative destruction, captured in Lefebvre's concept of 'implosion-explosion', a perpetual desire to re-order and restructure the socio-spatial process of urbanisation. This concept demands that we become open to the potentiality inherent within urban life, dwelling not on deviation from a pre-conceived ideal form of medieval urbanity, but attending to the generative lived experiences of past urban communities. The chapter therefore offers a contribution to understanding the emergent nature of urbanity and the way that it articulates with multi-scalar processes of devastation, disturbance, destruction, and crisis.

Ben Jervis: From Urban Devastation to Creative Destruction: Disturbance and Urban Life in Later Medie val England. In: Lekakis, S. et al (eds.), Towards an Archaeology of Devastation: Breaking/Replacing the People-Place Connection in Landscape. Heidelberg: heiBOOKS 2026, p. 191–209, DOI: https://doi.org/10.11588/heibooks.1613.c24607.

Introduction

Urban life is not stable. Towns and cities are continually transformed as urbanisation (the process of ongoing urban "becoming") intersects with other processes (Brenner and Schmid 2015: 168). Lefebvre (1970: 15–16) perceived of modern urbanisation as a process of 'implosion-explosion'; the concentration people and resources into specific locales both causes urban life to extend beyond towns and cities (explosion), whilst generating specific and transformative socio-spatial processes (implosion). This is captured in Smith's (2023) concept of 'energised crowding' – the generative potential of agglomeration to create new forms of life (see also Dovey et al. 2017: 268–70). The concept of creative destruction, derived from Schumpeter (1947), captures the way that the generation of something new requires the destruction of what came before. For Brenner and Schmid (2015: 176) creative destruction is the 'modus operandi of capitalist forms of urban development'… which 'underpin the patterns and pathways of urbanization, both historically and in the contemporary epoch'. The aim of this chapter is to explore the potential and implications of creative destruction for our understanding of urban life in a particular context (later medieval England) and how it articulates with a concept of devastation.

Devastation is a process of disconnection and destruction, which may take various forms and unfold at many scales (see Lekakis and Fairclough, this volume). The study of later medieval urban life allows us to perceive of devastation from two perspectives. Firstly, the 12th and 13th centuries were a time of urban growth, during which a network of 'new' towns, comprising a mix of entirely new foundations and the development of existing settlements, developed across England, founded by a range of landowners including the seigniorial elite, religious institutions, and the Crown (see Beresford 1967; Dyer 2003 for overviews). This process is associated with a commercialisation of the English economy, characterised in broad terms by increasing marketized commodity exchange, the specialisation of agrarian and commodity production and the breakdown of bonded tenurial arrangements in the countryside, in favour of money rents (Britnell 1996). The extent to which this resulted in the emergence of a 'capitalist' economy is open to debate. Dyer (2005: 41), for example, argues that commercialisation occurred within a 'feudal' system. Certainly, economic freedom was constrained by manorial custom and the household remained the principal unit of both production and consumption. Even so, some traits of capitalist relations can be observed; investment in the infrastructure of production by households rather than reliance upon communal facilities, the growth of waged labour and use of credit and the emergence of a mercantile class. These changes took place unevenly across England, varying in relation to the character of landowners, the wider marketing landscape, and the natural environment among other variables (e.g. Laughton & Dyer 1999; Bailey 2014). Urbanisation emerged both as a response to a commercialising impulse and as a phenomenon which amplified this impulse. As such, it can be understood as a process of disturbance (after Tsing 2015: 160–1), which impacted on the structure of rural labour, made demands on regional ecologies and necessitated displacement as communities moved to populate new, agglomerated, settlements. Urbanisation therefore had the potential to devastate environments and ways of life as something new was created through a process of destruction.

A second focus is provided by devastation to urban life itself. The 14th century was a period of crisis. The early decades are characterised by agricultural crisis in both the arable and pastoral sectors, caused, in part by climatic change (Campbell 2016). The 1340s saw the onset of the Black Death, which it is estimated reduced England's population by half (Broadberry et al. 2015: 14). Subsequent social and economic changes stimulated unrest, encapsulated by the Peasants, revolt, but also evident in disputes between townspeople and landowners (Hilton 1985: 14–15; Dyer 1992). The later 14th and early 15th centuries have traditionally been understood as a period of 'decay' and 'decline' in urban life, characterised by the shrinkage of towns, the decay of urban fabric and economic depression (see Lilley 2000 for overview). Recent studies have developed more nuanced approaches, identifying episodes of urban renewal and highlighting localised variability in urban developmental trajectories (e.g. Lilley 2015; Jervis 2017). Creative destruction offers an alternative means of understanding the impact of the devastation wrought by the 14th century crisis; allowing us to perceive of an implosion of urban life and the emergence of something new; an affirmative urban difference defined not in terms of what it lacks in relation to preceding forms of urbanity, in terms of what it creates (and destroys) (see Deleuze 1994; Braidotti 2013: 95–101 for discussions of difference as affirmative).

These concepts will be explored in reference to a specific case study, the small town of Reigate (Surrey) in southern England, which might be understood as a fairly typical new town, founded by a seigneurial lord, associated with, but distinct from, an early medieval settlement core, and which has been well investigated through archaeological excavation (see Williams and Poulton 2021). Reigate is best known for its eponymous building stone, which was widely used in the region, particularly in London (Tatton-Brown 2001). Urban development here was stimulated by the erection of a castle around the early 12th century, to the west of the early medieval manorial centre, colonising an area previously used for agriculture. The earliest reference to the town dates to c.1170, with a market having been established by 1276 (Hooper 1945: 22–23; Williams and Poulton 2021).

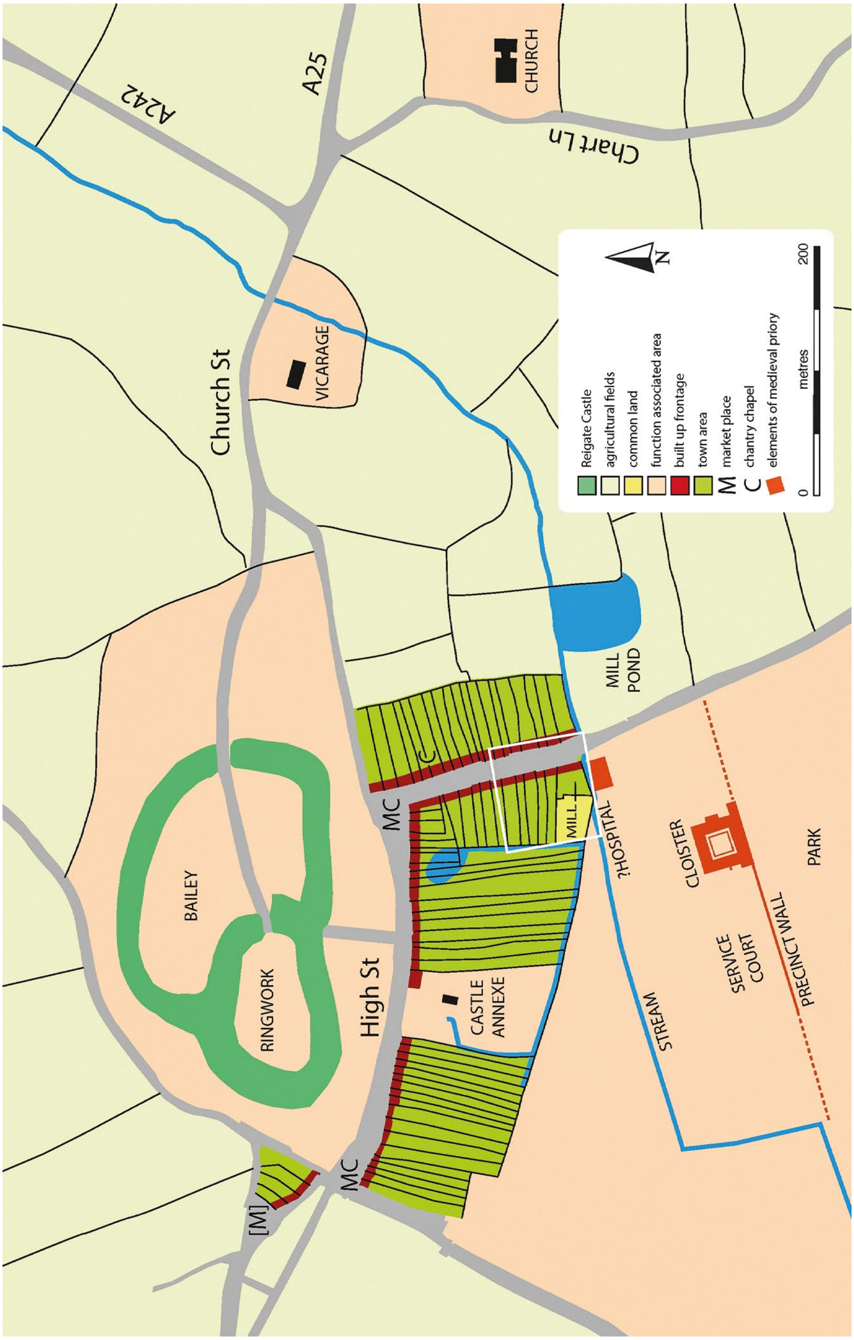
Urbanisation as Disturbance

Urbanisation, as an indicator of socio-economic complexity, is often understood as a mark of progress, featuring for example in early archaeological schemes of cultural evolution (e.g. Childe 1950). Progress narratives valorise the destruction of what went before, whilst often being blind to the processes of marginalisation and oppression that they might bring about (Tsing 2015: 5). Creative destruction as discussed by Brenner and Schmid (2015) encapsulates everything which is generated by the implosion-explosion of urban life. Others (e.g. Ianoş 2021) have sought to create an opposition between *creative destruction* and *destructive creation,* the latter characterised by the excesses of urbanisation; over exploitation of natural and labour resources resulting in urbanisation being a process of degradation and devastation. From this perspective, creative destruction can be understood as a social benefit; destruction to improve standards of living and the socio-ecological sustainability of urban life. Contemporary critique of neoliberal urban planning processes has equated this process of creative destruction to one of 'renewal', which, it is proposed, is a process of erasure, removing the vestiges of past urban life for perceived social benefit which can, in fact, serve to perpetuate the marginalisation of some communities and individuals (Roy 2006; Fenster 2019). Such critique calls into question whether creative destruction and destructive creation should be understood as separate, opposed, processes or as mutually constitutive, with one being an inseparable part of the other.

Creative destruction is a concept bound up in the condition of modern capitalist accumulation and exploitation. Such concepts must be adapted and applied to historical circumstances with care, attending to contextual specifics. However, as Brenner and Schmid (2015: 176) argue, the concept has potential both to understanding historical manifestations of urban life and the process through which contemporary urbanity emerged. Although not a capitalist society, processes of commercialisation and urbanisation in the Middle Ages can be understood as stimulating the emergence of capitalist traits. Both Dyer (2005: 41) and Epstein (2007) define capitalism in opposition to feudalism as characterised by the alienation of production, the presence of exclusive property rights, competitive markets, innovation and the dominance of waged labour. Following Tsing (2015: 62) we can take a different approach, whereby capitalism is defined as a 'means of concentrating wealth, which makes possible new investments which further concentrate wealth'. This is a definition of capitalist relations which can exist within a feudal society, and which could both further elite authority and wealth or lead to its breaking down, as the population develop the means to generate wealth and, by extension, power. As such, it is not productive to set feudal and capitalist in direct opposition, but to understand how feudal and capitalist relations can exist in productive dialogue with each other, as capitalist relations emerged unevenly and with varying affect and longevity (see also Howell 201 0: 300; Jervis 2022). From this perspective, creative destruction need not be understood as a symptom of a capitalist society, but rather as a function of those relations of capital acquisition which might exist within a 'feudal' context.

Medieval Urbanisation: The Case of Reigate

Medieval towns could develop in several ways. An existing village could simply be enfranchised with a market or borough charter, small settlements could be expanded through the creation of new streets and plots, or a town could be laid out anew. The motivation for the founder of a town can be easily perceived of as maximising the profit from their estate, both through the processing and marketing of surplus (including, potentially, the presence of artisans wholly or mostly reliant on the market for subsistence) and the retention of tolls and fees associated with trading (Beresford 1967: 60–3). What these different trajectories of urbanisation demonstrate is that urbanisation is a process through which difference is made. Whilst we are minded to recognise 'towns' as a coherent group, every town emerges through particular relations, grounded in specific landscapes, generative of path dependencies which constrain and enable the potential forms of urban life which might emerge. At Reigate, excavation demonstrates that plots, overlooked by the new castle, were laid out over previously cultivated land, several hundred metres away from the earlier manorial centre which likely administered a manor of dispersed farmsteads (Figure 9.1).


A242
A25
CHURCH
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VICARAGE
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C
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BAILEY
RINGWORK
High St
MILL
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CLOISTER
CASTLE ANNEXE
STREAM
SERVICE COURT
PRECINCT WALL
PARK
MC
[M]
N
Reigate Castle
agricultural fields
common land
function associated area
built up frontage
town area
M market place
C chantry chapel
elements of medieval priory
0
metres
200

Fig 9.1 Plan of Reigate around 1350. The early manorial centre of Churchfelle is situated close to the site of the vicarage to the east of the town. White box shows the location of sites depicted in Figures 2 and 3. Image: Williams and Poulton 2021 (Copyright Surrey County Archaeological Unit (part of Surrey County Council), reproduced with permission).

The development of the town was, in this context, new. Recent research (Casson & Casson 2023: 284) has framed the lords who founded towns as entrepreneurs. The idea of the entrepreneur is central to Schumpeter's (1940: 150–4) discussion of the role of creation in economic history, in which he introduces a concept of creative destruction. For Schumpeter the entrepreneur is the character who most exemplifies the process of creation, which he stands in contrast to adaptation. In this light, Hamelin de Warenne, Earl of Surrey, who founded the town can be framed as the entrepreneur, purposefully destroying productive rural land to create something new; a nucleated community which could be controlled and observed from his castle overlooking the town, and where the community could work in service of it.

The peopling of a town necessitated displacement through migration. This is typically perceived of as positive process of social advancement. Migrants were induced by the economic freedoms granted to burgesses, which might include exemption from certain tolls as well as the shedding of obligations of service to the manor in favour of money rents (e.g. Rees Jones 2020: 282; Dyer 2022: 236). A further driving factor was demography; the 13th century was a time of substantial population growth; Broadberry et al. (2015: 12) estimate that in the period c1190–1220 the annual national growth rate was 0.83%, dropping to 0.21% in the period 1220–1250 (a rise from approximately 3.10 million to 4.23 million). For the period 1086–1290 the estimated growth rate within the county of Surrey was 0.59% (Broadberry et al. 2015: 37). The best source for estimating medieval populations, the 14th century poll tax lists, do not survive in its entirety for Surrey and therefore it is not possible to derive an estimate of the population of the borough itself at this time (see Fenwick 2001: 537). Urbanisation provided one solution to a growing population; creating new opportunities for labour and providing households with a means to access surplus produce. It is questionable whether Reigate received a borough charter, but typically towns referred to as boroughs provided tenants with a range of privileges and economic freedoms.

The source of these migrants cannot be ascertained, but parallels can perhaps be drawn with better documented towns in the English midlands. At Birmingham and Halesowen, for example, it is likely that at least some of the migrants came from dispersed settlements around these manors (Hilton 1984: 58; Dyer 2022: 238–9). However, surnames including a geographical element also indicate migration from further afield (Dyer 2020: 253–5). Rather than surrendering land, it is probable that migrants represent the children of rural householders, drawn to the town as population pressure increased demand on rural land and slackened demand for rural labour (Dyer 2022: 236–7). The migration of adolescents from rural areas to towns to undertake a period of service or training was increasingly common (Swanson 1988: 44–7) and this movement provided a further means through which towns could build the skilled population required to develop as sites of economic specialisation.

Medieval urbanisation undoubtedly stimulated processes of disturbance; it necessitated the exploitation of building materials and labour and disrupted households. Household labour which had been engaged in agrarian production to meet the, primarily local, needs of the manor and community was rechannelled towards sustaining new forms of urban life, through specialisation and the resultant entanglement with the emergent market and associated accumulation of wealth by urban merchants and successful artisans. As such, urbanisation can be understood as creating a disconnection in the relationship between landscape and identity; it was a process through which existing relations were destroyed to generate something new. Whilst Reigate lacks documentation, we might envisage that the town was populated, in part at least, by people drawn from the outlying farmsteads which characterise the manor (Hooper 1945: 23–24). Hamelin de Warenne, referred to Reigate as 'my town' (*mea villa*) (Williams and Poulton 2021: 143), suggesting clear intent in the promotion of urban development and by extension the creation of new forms of urban life through the disruption, displacement and destruction of elements of rurality. Yet, the excavated sequence provides a different perspective on this process, demonstrating how the power to shape medieval urbanity was not held by a particular individual, but emerged out of the relations between more-than-human participants in the urbanisation process (see Harris 2021: 59–60 for an overview of this approach to power).

Excavation at 34–36 Bell Street suggests that urbanisation was not an imposition of a pre-determined mode of living differently, but an ongoing process of the unpicking, disruption, and destruction of ways of life. Here, the earliest building on the site, erected over earlier plough soils, is not a stereotypical 'urban' house but rather a post-built structure incorporating a crop drying kiln, used for the drying of oats (and perhaps for baking) and dated to the later 12th century (Figure 9.2). It is debated whether this was a room within a larger structure, or an annexe to a further building extending into the unexcavated area (Williams and Poulton 2021: 22). A similar kiln has been excavated within a broadly contemporary structure interpreted as a barn at 16–18 Bell Street, to the north of this plot. At 34–36 Bell Street the evidence for crop processing is contemporary with the revetment of a stream to the south, interpreted as a mill race. A parallel can perhaps be drawn with Austin and Thomas's (1989) interpretation of rural displacement at Okehampton Park (Devon). Inspired by the concept of *habitus*, they propose that the impact of displacement on rural tenants for the creation of a deer park at Okehampton was mitigated through the continued inhabitation of familiar domestic spaces, which allowed for the remaking of domestic life elsewhere. The first phase of 'urban' life at Reigate could be understood in similar terms, with the erection of structures associated with cultivation both indicative of continued relations with the land and allowing for the persistence of elements of pre-urban life within a new setting. As Christopherson (2017: 72–3) discusses in relation to Trondheim (Norway), the initial settling of towns is a phase through which urban spatial understandings emerge through the entanglement of rural practices and attitudes into a new way of life. This may imply that in this early phase the town was populated from within the manor, rather than bringing experiences of urban life elsewhere to the new town.

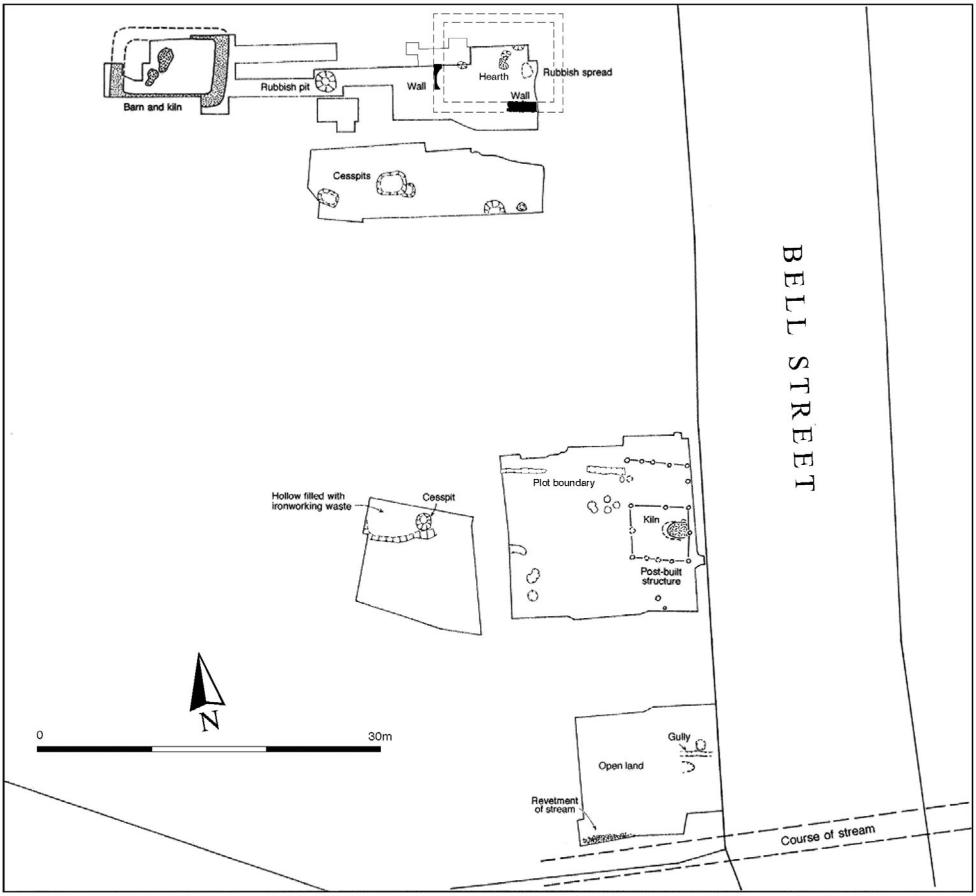
Barn and kiln
Rubbish pit
Wall
Hearth
Rubbish spread
Wall
Cesspits
BELL STREET
Plot boundary
Hollow filled with ironworking waste
Cesspit
Kiln
Post-built structure
N
0
30m
Gully
Open land
Revetment of stream
Course of stream

Fig 9.2 Bell Street, Reigate in the later 12th/early 13th century. The northernmost excavation areas are 16–18 Bell Street, those in the middle are 24–26 Bell Street and the southernmost is 34–36 Bell Street. Image: Williams and Poulton 2021 (Copyright Surrey County Archaeological Unit (part of Surrey County Council), reproduced with permission).

The stratigraphic sequence reveals, however, that this process was not a simple transplantation of dispersed rural farmsteads into an agglomerated settlement. Agglomeration is affective, generating new forms of social relationship (Smith 2023), new relations of co-operation and conflict and new forms of life. The excavated evidence at 24–26 Bell Street suggests that by the mid-14th century the settlement was of quite different character (Williams and Poulton 2021: 151–3). To the north of the excavated area a chalk floored, timber framed building was erected adjacent to the street and a stone house was erected on the site of the earlier kiln, with a wooden lined cess pit to the rear (Figure 9.3). To the north at 16–18 Bell Street, the earlier barn had been removed and a stone building on the site, linked to a well by a conduit, was associated with a cluster of pits and perhaps functioned as a smithy on the basis of its substantial hearth and stone lined water tank (Williams and Poulton 2021: 146).

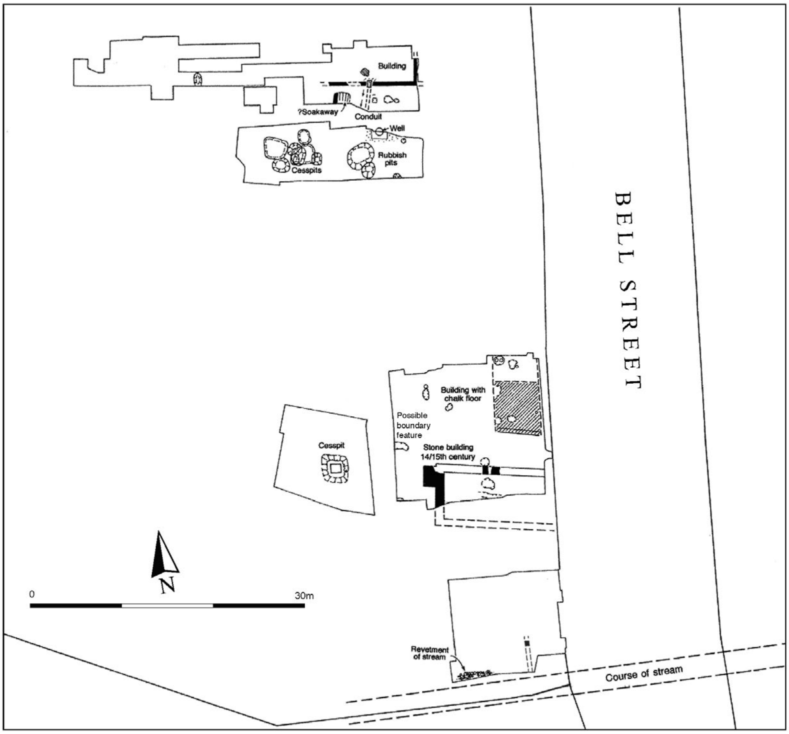
Building
?Soakaway
Conduit
Well
Rubbish pits
Cesspits
BELL STREET
Building with chalk floor
Possible boundary feature
Cesspit
Stone building 14/15th century
N
0
30m
Revetment of stream
Course of stream

Fig 9.3 Bell Street, Reigate in the later 13th/early 14th century. The northernmost excavation areas are 16–18 Bell Street, those in the middle are 24–26 Bell Street and the southernmost is 34–36 Bell Street. Image: Williams and Poulton 2021 (Copyright Surrey County Archaeological Unit (part of Surrey County Council), reproduced with permission).

This sequence draws into focus how urbanisation is itself a form of devastation; breaking apart persistent relations between people and their environments to generate something new. This is a process which can simultaneously be understood as both creative destruction and destructive creation; the slow unpicking of rural lifeways was both generative of what we might perceive as 'urbanity' and destructive in the way that it amplified and intensified the exploitation of resources in service of urban life. Rather than persisting with a binary opposition between these processes, it is productive to consider them as enfolded within each other. To do this, we can draw a link with the concepts of striated, smooth and holey space developed by the philosophers Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 483–4; see Jervis 2019: 41–2 for a discussion of these concepts in relation to archaeological thought). In simple terms, Deleuze and Guattari perceive of a world constituted of flows which agglomerate into affective assemblages of relations, which are pulled beyond themselves by other relations. In 'smooth' space these flows can move freely and entangle in infinite ways. The striation of space, for example, by state apparatus, constrains these flows, limiting the potential trajectories of becoming which can emerge out of assemblages. Holey space can be perceived of as a transitory space where smooth and striated space come into negotiation, where striation bores into the smooth or where the smooth resists striation. Gabrielsson (2013: 179) argues that these holey spaces are the products of creative destruction.

It is not possible to perceive of striated space mapping on to the urban and smooth space onto a pre-urban rurality. Rural life was striated by patterns of landholding and manorial control, as well as constraints of the natural environment and agricultural technologies, for example. Smoothness exists between striations and it is in this smoothness that difference is able to emerge. By founding Reigate, de Warenne created the town as a holey space, urban striation bored into these rural lives, a process which both constrained relations but also created new smooth spaces in between, the spaces out of which multiple urbanities could emerge.

Just as smooth and striated space do not exist in opposition, so urban and rural can be fruitfully understood as existing within each other, rather than within a binary relationship (e.g. Jervis 2016; Angelo 2017). The early stages of urban life at Reigate appear to have 'salvaged' rurality (after Tsing 2015: 63), resisting the potential for erasure inherent within creative destruction. Rather than being framed as indicators of economic progress, the plots at Reigate can be understood as spaces of rural dereliction (after Massumi 1996: 104–5), emerging within the cracks in the imposed structures of urbanisation, which allowed urban life to emerge differentiated from previous forms not by what has been lost, but by what they share. Yet, the holey space is not a smooth space in which life could emerge outside of the imposed structures of urbanity. They are spaces which can be 'captured' by striated space (Frichot 2007); the emergence of the new routines of the market, the associated generation of wealth, capital and power, the impulse to specialise economic production all served to plug the holes through which the residues of rural life could persist, transforming flows into life which was more distinctively urbanised, gradually materialised in the built form of the mid-14th century town.

This discussion has sought to demonstrate that urbanisation can be understood as a process of devastation, in the sense that it decouples people from their landscapes; that its creation entails destruction. Yet, the perception and experience of this process was varied. It generated spaces for resistance and adaptation, as well as creating new forms of urban life, with change unfolding not as a single event but as an ongoing process of sociospatial transformation. These lives were both created through destruction but were destructive themselves, placing new demands on resources, especially as they became increasingly entangled within relations of market exchange. Yet, these lives were, themselves, precarious as a consideration of the devastation of the 14th century shows.

Destruction or Renewal? Crisis and the Devastation of Urban Life

A range of evidence has been used to formulate an understanding of the urban sector experiencing economic and demographic decline through the later 14th–15th centuries. In general terms, tax records indicate a decline in both the number of taxpayers and the revenues collected, whilst pleas for relief from urban communities, as well as the observations of contemporary travellers, point to a decay of urban fabric (e.g. Dobson 1977). The picture provided by these records is both incomplete and difficult to interpret, and the exact relationship between processes of 'decline' in urban populations and prosperity and the decay of urban space and institutions ill defined (Reynolds 1980; Lilley 2000; Rigby 2010). Generalised depression stands in contrast to clear evidence of individual wealth shown, for example, through the acquisition of rural land and the building of new houses by townspeople, and to the evidence of civic investment, for example in new churches (e.g. Bridbury 1981). For a long time, a decline in the quantity of archaeological evidence for 15th century urban life was taken as potential evidence for urban decay (see Astill 2000), however it is clear from the explosion of archaeological investigations undertaken over the last 30 years that the picture provided from material remains is as varied and problematic as that from written sources. The most realistic reading of the evidence is for the fortunes of towns to have been highly varied, but also to understand that communities exerted agency over the developmental trajectories of their towns (see Lilley 2015; Jervis 2017). We should question, for example, whether the turning over of large areas in the centre of the town of Huntingdon (Cambridgeshire) to cultivated ground, complete with drying ovens (Clarke 2009), should be understood as a decay of urbanity or a conscious decision by an urban community to make productive use of newly available land within the town, in order to bolster food security at a time when the rural sector was hit both by labour shortages and the related rise in pastoral production.

Lilley (2015) has argued that this exertion of agency can be understood in terms of urban renewal, which might entail the conscious and deliberate 'downsizing' of urban space or the replanning of urban areas. Increasingly, archaeologists and historians have talked about the 'resilience' of both urban and rural communities in the face of crisis (e.g. Curtis 2014; contributions to Gerrard et al. 2021). Resilience itself is a contested concept; precision is needed in defining what elements of urban life might exhibit resilience, whether this is formulated in terms of the ability to retain its form or to adapt. Crucially, the implications of resilience in terms of the sustained marginalisation of those members of urban communities who might be negatively impacted or overlooked in processes of conscious 'resilience building' must also be considered (see e.g. Scott 2013; Anderson 2015; Braidotti 2019: 171).

Narratives of urban decline stand in opposition to those which perceive of urbanisation as progress. Urban decline implies a loss of the essential qualities of urban life. By extension, it rests on an understanding of urbanisation as a uniform and unchanging phenomenon, which lacks the ability to spring back to its original, and ideal, form, a quality which could be referred to as elasticity (Malabou 2012: 36), or resilience, in the sense of this as a return to a previous state of equilibrium. Perceiving of the return of urban plots to cultivation as adaptation, or resilience through evolution, is equally unsatisfactory as this suggests that the purpose of this action is the retention of the 'essence' of urban life, concealing the potential inherent within processes of urbanisation for towns to emerge differently. If we see urbanisation as an ongoing process of urban becoming, then we can understand urbanity as 'plastic', as possessing the ability both to hold its form (what is privileged in resilience narratives), but also to be reformed as something different (Malabou 2012: 3). Following Deleuze and Guattari we can understand towns as 'actual' but also as 'virtual', meaning that they possess capacities to become otherwise. The actualisation of these capacities is dependent upon the relations which are both constitutive of urban life and extend from it (Harris 2021: 53–5). Plasticity is a quality which allows us to think through this process of actualisation. It is typically perceived of in terms of the ability to create, but Malabou (2012: 4) draws attention to its destructive potential, stating that 'no one thinks spontaneously about a plastic art of destruction. Yet, destruction too is formative. A smashed-up face is still a face, a stump a limb, a traumatized psyche remains a psyche. Destruction has its own sculpting tools'. This offers an alternative metaphor; to think of urbanity as plastic is to understand that it can be creatively destroyed; the sculpting of urban space can be imagined as the boring of 'holey' spaces, the incision of striated space or processes of smoothing to create a surface from which new forms of life can emerge.

Two excavations in Reigate reveal different sequences of apparent urban decay. At 24–26 Bell Street deposits suggest that the mid-14th century stone building was not systematically demolished but left abandoned and allowed to decay (Williams and Poulton 2021: 26–7). Prior to the erection of a new building around 1600 this area would appear to have been open ground, occupied by the vestiges of a ruinous structure. This corresponds with documentary evidence from 1447 which indicates much of the land in the town to have been leased for a reduced rent, or to have lain vacant (Williams and Poulton 2021: 153). This part of the town exemplifies a perception of the 14th century as a period of devastation, as the loss of urban life. This site represents a rupture in the striation of urban space; the creation of a holey space. This process of decay might be perceived as one of destructive creation; of the residues of past urban life lingering to create a space of waste. Through decay, the space reveals its plasticity, its ability to retain elements of its form whilst becoming something else.

In contrast, at 16–18 Bell St the 14th century stone building appears to have been purposefully demolished, with the land being turned over to cultivation, a use it retained until the 18th century (Williams and Poulton 2021: 46). A narrative of decay and decline would characterise this change as one of regression, antithetical to notions of urban progress. Whilst the mid-14th century urban landscape appears to lack the infrastructure of barns and drying ovens of the previous phase, it is likely that cultivation persisted as a part of urban plots, gardens being an important part of the infrastructure of medieval towns (Dyer 2006). Crisis and devastation created conditions in which this component of urban life could become amplified. This transition appears one of conscious creative destruction, an act of imagining urban space differently. Just as the acquisition of rural land can be framed as the emergence of a land market (Dyer 2005: 50–1), so the acquisition of urban land at a lower rent for cultivation can be seen as an act of accumulation. Urban cultivation was not a smoothing of the striations of commerce, but rather a boring into these as devastation of both urban and rural communities and landscapes allowed for prevailing forms of urban life to be re-shaped. Urban persistence then is not reliant on the elasticity of urban life, but on its plasticity, its ability to shift and re-form, to become differently, for flows of matter and labour to negotiate the enfolded relation of the striations of urban structure and the possibilities of the smooth spaces between. Such an approach reframes resilience not as the persistence of the essential elements of urbanity, but in the persistence of the affirmative potential of situated relations to sustain and generate forms of urbanised life.

Discussing urban planning after the Black Death, Lilley (2015) highlights the various ‘agents of change’ who played a role in the planned contraction or re-development of urban spaces, including landholders, civic authorities and architects. These agents of change, the entrepreneurs in Schumpeter’s conceptualisation of creative destruction, are visible in processes such as the laying out of suburbs or the erection of a town wall, but are more ambiguous in the opportunistic use of newly empty urban space. Rather than understanding decay in wholly negative terms, we might perceive of it as creating an opening for those typically excluded from narratives of urban 'development' to demonstrate entrepreneurial agency in manipulating spaces in creative ways which, whilst serving to erase one form of urban life, allows them to recast it through their own lived practices. From this perspective we can move from thinking of these spaces as embodying decay, to being spaces of minoritarian urban life; that is as associated with ways of living with and making urban space which sit outside of a prevailing perception of what the urban 'should' be. Furthermore, these minoritarian forms of urban life are more-than-human in their composition, in this holey space of dereliction new socionatures could emerge (Gandy 2016); the colonisation of the ruins by non-human life, for example. These processes breach the order of urban life, allowing it to become something else. Decay did not entirely smooth this space, however; it retained its role as 'property' which was later developed. Thinking through this site in this way allows us to reveal both disturbance through urbanisation, but also the disturbance of urban life itself.

As economic prosperity improved, Reigate saw increasing development, but these spaces of cultivation were not lost (Williams and Poulton 2021: 153–4). Rather, new development grew up along the High Street, colonising areas previously occupied by the outer defences of the now redundant castle, as well as decayed spaces such as that at 24–26 Bell Street. Spaces of cultivation had become incorporated into the fabric of urban life; their presence had shifted from a product of the loss of relations and the resultant smoothing to become a striating presence; devastation had unplugged holey spaces and allowed for urbanity to emerge differently.

Conclusion

If defined as the uncoupling of the relationship between landscape and identity, devastation can be understood as a process of disturbance, generative of new forms of life through destruction. Tsing (2015: 161) argues that disturbance is not an absolute phenomenon; 'disturbance matters in relation to how we live… [it] refers to an open-ended range of unsettling phenomena'. Devastation is an extreme and destructive consequence of disturbance, but one which can be equally subjective and unevenly experienced. Urbanisation entailed the creation of new forms of urbanised life and, in turn necessitated the destruction of what came before. Town foundation was a process through which landscapes were destroyed and the associated ways of life devastated. Processes of displacement and migration were essential to the sustenance of urban life, as was the intensified exploitation of resources, making urban life an ongoing cause of disturbance and potential devastation. Yet urbanity is not a constant, nor does it exist in opposition to rurality. Rather, the example of the early stages of Reigate's development shows how urban life could salvage elements of rurality, which were gradually broken down and repurposed, a process of slow destruction to sustain and create situated urbanities. This relationship of imposed destruction and the unravelling of the relations constitutive of urban life can be elucidated through the metaphor of smooth, striated and holey space, with new forms of life emerging in the holey spaces which emerge at the intersection of the urban and manorial apparatus, and dwelling.

Destruction is a perpetual part of urban life, visible in Reigate both through the unpicking of rural relations through the 13th and 14th centuries and the devastation of this form of urbanity in the 14th and 15th centuries. Evoking a metaphor of plasticity provides a means to understand how disturbance reshaped urban lives. Rather than perceiving of decline we can think of urbanity emerging differently, as destruction led to the creation of urban life anew. It is through the impacts of devastation that we can perceive of urban life being disrupted by the eruption of new forms of life in the holey spaces which break through the urban apparatus, for example as low rents stimulated the colonisation of space for cultivation, which became embedded and amplified as a constituent of urban living.

A focus on disturbance, destruction and devastation takes us beyond simply questioning the ability of urban life to resist the impacts of crisis through resilience building. Understanding urbanisation as disturbance questions the implications of ongoing urban development, both for those inhabiting these spaces and for life beyond them. These concepts take us away from a narrative of progress, towards an understanding of the diversity of urban life and potential urbanities.

Acknowledgements

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Biography

Ben Jervis is Professor of Medieval Archaeology at the University of Leicester (UK). He is a specialist in the archaeology of later medieval England, specifically the study of urbanisation and material culture. He has written widely on these topics, particularly from a post-humanist perspective. He is currently PI of the UKRI-funded project Urban Life in a Time of Crisis – Enduring Urbanism in Later Medieval England (ENDURE).

10. The Teotihuacan ‘Collapse’ and the Persistence of Abandonment in the Archaeological Narrative

Natalia Moragas Segura, Maria Torras Freixa
and Alessandra Pecci

Keywords Teotihuacan; Collapse; Resilience; Resignification

Abstract Teotihuacan is well-known as a unique and monumental city from the Classic period which ‘collapsed’ in the middle of the 6th century CE. Even though the city was ‘devastated’ in both material and immaterial dimensions (failure of the central government, lootings, intentional fires, and iconoclast actions), the city continued to be inhabited and be part of the cultural memory of the Teotihuacan Valley. After a long-term process of transformation, deurbanisation and ruralisation, the Teotihuacan Valley was occupied with a different settlement pattern. During the Late Postclassic and Early Colonial times a new people-place connection with the built environment was established by various groups and agents. Thus, a new landscape was shaped and the interaction with the remains of the ancient city of Teotihuacan changed, establishing new meanings related to legitimisation and instrumentalisation of the power relations. In a few words, the civic-ceremonial centre of Teotihuacan was re-sacralised and mythized in order to create a new narrative that was described in the ethnohistorical sources. This paper analyzes the depiction of the fall of Teotihuacan in the archaeological narrative which traditionally has emphasised collapse and sudden abandonment in a synchronic perspective. However, the long-term consequences of this event can also be evaluated diachronically, depicting Teotihuacan as a changing and resilient settlement inhabited by different groups between the collapse of the city and Early Colonial times.

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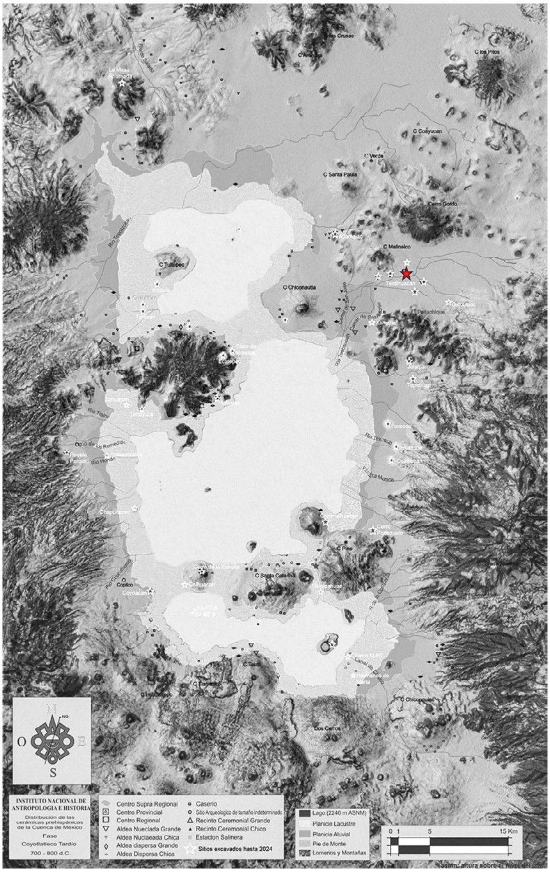
Introduction

In the northeastern sector of the Basin of Mexico, lies the ancient pre-Hispanic city of Teotihuacan (1–650 CE). Known for its rapid and sustained growth, and a well-defined architectural and urban planning program, Teotihuacan showcased the pinnacle of urban development in Central Mexico during the first five centuries of the Common Era. During its peak, Teotihuacan housed a multiethnic population of possibly around 125,000 inhabitants living in an area of 20 km^2 (Cowgill 2015; Manzanilla 2017, 2020). Teotihuacan played a crucial role in the Classic period, standing out as one of the largest and most monumental cities, but also influencing the historical development of the Central Highlands. Its impact on contemporary cultures is evident through its connections with the Zapotecs of Monte Alban, the Gulf Lowlands, and various cities of the Maya Lowlands, among others (Hirth et al. 2020).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Distribución de las cerámicas prehispánicas de la Cuenca de México
Fase
Coyotlatleco Tardío
700 - 800 d.C.
Centro Supra Regional
Centro Provincial
Centro Regional
Aldea Nueclada Grande
Aldea Nuclaeada Chica
Aldea dispersa Grande
Aldea Dispersa Chica
Caserio
Sitio Arqueologico de tamaño indeterminado
Recinto Ceremonial Grande
Recinto Ceremonial Chico
Estacion Salinera
Sitios excavados hasta 2024
Lago (2240 m ASNM)
Planicie Lacustre
Planicie Aluvial
Pie de Monte
Lomerios y Montañas
0 1 5 15 Km
asnm: altura sobre el nivel del mar

Fig 10.1
The Basin of Mexico during the Coyotlatelco period (650-850 CE). Modified from Raul Garcia -INAH EdoMex.

Unlike other urban settlements in Mesoamerica, mainly in the Mayan area, where cities were covered by the rainforest and forgotten by most of the people, Teotihuacan is not truly a 'lost city'. Its main monumental ruins have been visible throughout the centuries to the present-day. For generations, the inhabitants of the Teotihuacan Valley have seen the progressive abandonment of several architectural structures of the Classic city and the transformation of most of its areas, including the civic-ceremonial centre, into crop fields.

In addition, the location of Teotihuacan in the Basin of Mexico, not far from Tenochtitlan (the capital of the Mexica/Aztec empire) and then Mexico City, influenced its mythification and power instrumentalisation by external agents such as the Aztecs (correctly also called the Mexica). Even though the remains of Teotihuacan have been visible, and some areas have been inhabited continuously, the historiographical discourse has stated the idea of an abandoned city, focusing research on its Classic period and the collapse itself. However, the point that we want to address in this text is that the archaeological narrative has commonly emphasised the idea of 'collapse'/'devastation'/'abandonment' of the city as an endpoint rather than looking beyond this event and its long-term consequences on the settlement of the urban area from the Epiclassic (650–850 CE) to the Early Colonial times (16th and 17th centuries). If the 'collapse and abandonment' cannot be denied; it did not mean the complete abandonment of the city itself.

We note that this text strictly examines the history of the urban area of the Classic city of Teotihuacan; the city itself, while we are not analyzing the settlement pattern history of the Teotihuacan Valley which has been thoroughly explored by the Teotihuacan Valley Project (Evans and Sanders 2000; Sanders 1986; Sanders, Parsons and Santley 1979).

Table 1 Established periods and ceramics phases for the region of study, the Teotihuacan Valley (based on Buckley et al. 2023; Nichols 2015).

Central Highlands Periods	Teotihuacan (Ceramic Phases)	Years
Late Postclassic	Late Aztec	CE 1350–1521
Middle Postclassic	Early Aztec	CE 1150–1350
Early Postclassic	Mazapa	CE 850–1150
Epiclassic	Coyotlatelco	CE 650–850
Classic	Metepec	CE 550–650
	Xolalpan	CE 350–550
	Tlamimilolpa	CE 150–350
Terminal Formative	Miccaotli	CE 100–150
	Tzacualli	CE 1–100
	Patlachique	100 BCE – CE 1

Historiographical Overview: The Abandoned Teotihuacan in the Archaeological Narrative

From pre-Hispanic times to the present-day, the city of Teotihuacan has been the framework used for political and cultural purposes related to the construction of the Mexican national identity during the Republican period until our days.

Teotihuacan was undoubtedly a significant culture of Mesoamerica. In this sense it was also an important element in the construction of the Mexican national identity. In 1905, the Mexican president Porfirio Díaz promoted the excavation of the Sun Pyramid as an element to commemorate the first centenary of the Independence of Mexico. Furthermore, from the end of the 19th century, the site of Teotihuacan has been the object of important archaeological projects contributing to the development of Archaeology as a scientific discipline in the Mexican academia (López Luján 2017).

Over the course of time, this site has been examined from several approaches and disciplines contributing to the understanding of this urban society. A main issue has been the collapse of the city and its sudden abandonment, a theme that has fascinated researchers who worked in Teotihuacan and elsewhere. The discovery of the evidence of a 'big fire', recently dated to the 550 CE (Beramendi et al. 2009), and a change in the material culture promoted this idea of collapse and abandonment. In the following lines, we discuss how this idea has been shaped within the archaeological discourse creating a biased view of the history of Teotihuacan after its fall, which we defend was not completely abandoned although it underwent a profound transformation, which involved decrease in population, emergence of new cultural and social agents, and a regeneration process.

At the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, the Mexican anthropologist and archaeologist Leopoldo Batres led some of the first excavations and restorations in Teotihuacan, particularly around the main large-scale buildings, the Sun and the Moon Pyramids (Figure 10.2 and 10.3). At that time, the chronology of Teotihuacan as a city primarily from the Classic period (150–650 CE) was not established

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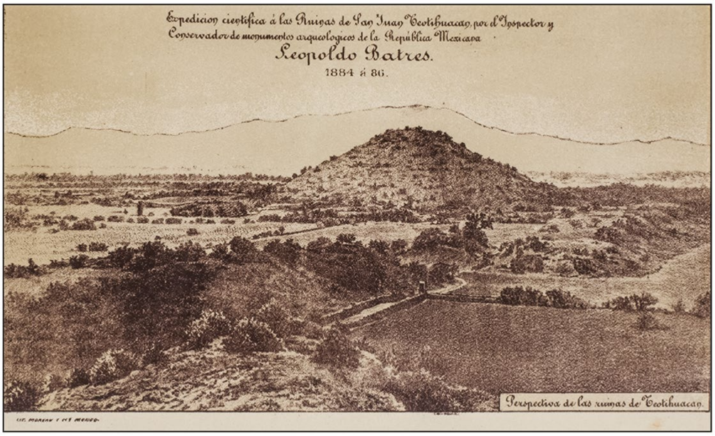
[1] In ethnohistoric sources, the Toltecs are also considered to be the wise men, as opposed to the Chichimecs, and are part of narratives recorded by the Spaniards. There has been a long discussion on the definition of Toltecs and the identification of the city of 'Tollan' mentioned by the sources, that goes beyond the objectives of this paper. The academic community has agreed that Tollan is the archaeological site of Tula, located in the present-day state of Hidalgo, and the Toltecs are commonly defined as the inhabitants of this ancient city of Tula. Scholars have indentified the site of Tula as the new regional power in Central Highlands after the fall of Teotihuacan, and that during the Early Postclassic (850-1150 CE), Tula played an important role in the center of Mexico. However, new dates suggest a possible contemporaneity between the beginning of Tula and the last days of Classic Teotihuacan (Paredes and Healan 2021).

yet. In fact, it is not surprising that these first scientific works attributed a Toltec[1] affiliation to the city. Leopoldo Batres was one of the first researchers to pinpoint the idea of an abrupt abandonment of Teotihuacan. This statement was based on traces of fire that he identified everywhere in the site but mainly in the excavations of the city center (Batres 1889, 1906). Even, after an excavation in 1886, Batres (1889: 12) wondered whether the 'Toltec' city of Teotihuacan was destroyed by its own inhabitants to protect its sacredness from a series of invasions that were going to desecrate their temples. Batres' interpretation was based on the 19th century antagonistic model that perceived the Toltecs as a 'race' of wise men and the Aztecs as their opposite.


Expedicion cientifica á las Ruinas de San Juan Teotihuacan, por el Inspector y
Conservador de monumentos arqueologicos de la República Mexicana
Leopoldo Batres.
1884 á 86.
Perspectiva de las ruinas de Teotihuacan.
LIT. MOREAU Y Hº MEXICO

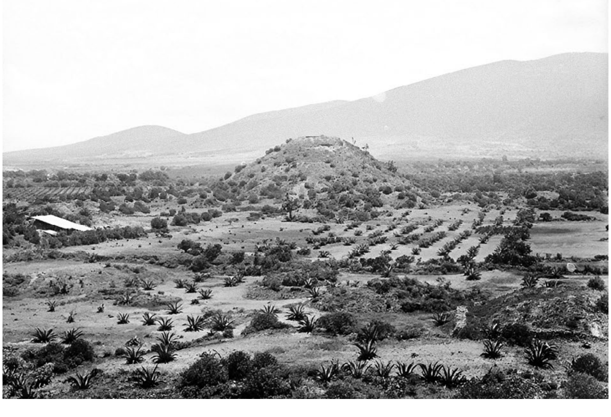


Fig 10.2 (Top) Lithography depicting the Sun Pyramid at the end of 19th century before Leopoldo Batres' excavations and reconstructions (Batres 1889: plate II).

Fig 10.3 View of the Moon Pyramid and surrounding areas before its reconstruction, c.1920. Historical photography is a helpful resource to hypothetically recreate and imagine the abandonment and transformation of the centre of Teotihuacan through time (Picture: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia de México, Mediateca INAH, CC BY-NC {Hyperlink http://mediateca.inah.gob.mx/islandora_74/islandora/object/fotografia%3A320392 accessed: 18/09/25}).

A few years after Batres' publications, when Teotihuacan was already dated as a Classic site rather than a Toltec one, Pedro Armillas (1944) agreed with the proposal that Teotihuacan was burnt, its main buildings destroyed and the cause of the abandonment of the city was this abrupt event. Furthermore, Armillas and other researchers like Sigvald Linné added more information to this event stating that after the fire, a short period of abandonment occurred, followed by a reoccupation of some areas of the site by the Coyotlatelco culture and then the Mazapa culture (Armillas 1950; Linné 1934: 217). The idea of a drastic abandonment of Teotihuacan persisted in the archaeological narrative of the second half of the 20th century. In this sense, new hypotheses were added, i.e. Wigberto Jiménez (1959) proposed that the city was abandoned by its inhabitants, and between the fall of Teotihuacan and the rise of Tula took place a great migration of people to southern lands.

The magnitude of this destructive event was better perceived and described archaeologically in the 1960s and 1970s, thanks to three macro projects developed by Ignacio Bernal (Proyecto Teotihuacan 1962–64), René Millon (Teotihuacan Mapping Project), and William T. Sanders (Teotihuacan Valley Project) in Teotihuacan itself and the surrounding areas of the Valley of Teotihuacan. In particular, the Teotihuacan Mapping Project persistently detected the evidence of a large fire, the so-called 'big fire', that affected numerous buildings mainly from the city center, of looting in both public structures and apartment compounds (Figure 10.4), and a radical change in the material culture evidenced by the presence of a new ceramic assemblage identified as Coyotlatelco (Millon 1973, 1981, 1988).

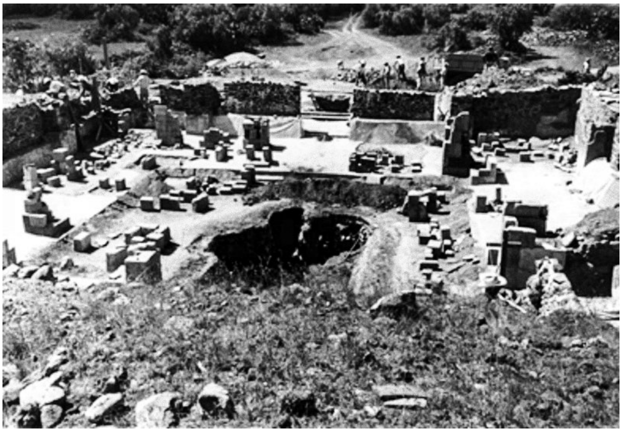


Fig 10.4 View of the 20th century excavations depicting ancient lootings and destruction (Picture: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia de México, Mediateca INAH, CC BY-NC {Hyperlink http://mediateca.inah.gob.mx/islandora_74/islandora/object/fotografia%3A402522 }, accessed: 23/11/24).

Through the analysis of ceramic typology and radiocarbon dates, researchers were able to initially propose 750 CE as the date for this violent moment. In the archaeological narrative, this date was used to mark the end of the Classic period in Central Highlands Mexico, and the beginning of a new chronological period associated to specific material remains: the Epiclassic period and the Coyotlatelco material culture. Although in the three macro projects the post-Teotihuacan period is discussed, in general the academic researchers did not pay it much attention, except for few studies.

One of these exceptions is the study led by Thomas Charlton. In the 1970s, Charlton conducted a project to understand the material culture of the Colonial (1521–1810) and Republican (1810–1960) periods. The objective was to establish the first ceramic typology of these periods and to understand the impact of the Spanish Conquest in the Teotihuacan Valley. The results of this project showed that, throughout the 16th century and the first half of the 17th century, the material culture of the Valley was mostly locally produced within an indigenous tradition (Charlton 1972a, 1972b). Likewise, the introduction of metal was scarce and obsidian (that was one of the most important raw materials in Classic Teotihuacan) remained the main raw material to produce utensils probably due to the scarce access to iron tools (Cressey 1974). As well, new ceramics, such as majolica produced in cluding American and Chinese porcelain and imported by the Manila galleon, had a minor distribution. These results were consistent with the process of ruralisation and marginalisation process of the area, and with the idea of the survival of the indigenous traditions in rural areas which did not display specific productions likely to attract the interest of the Spaniards (Charlton and Fournier 1993).

Moving forward, in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, the abandonment of Teotihuacan was defined as a collapse and the research was focused on understanding the factors explaining the societal collapse. Likewise, the post-collapse period was depicted as the phase of disappearance of everything that characterised Teotihuacan as a unique multiethnic urban society. First explanations pointed to the arrival of militaristic and violent Coyotlatelco groups from an undefined area of Western Mexico, that attacked, destroyed, and occupied the city (Acosta 1972; Braniff 1972). Alternatively, Jiménez (1966: 51–53) suggested that the Otomis were the invading group. During these decades, scholars were highly engaged in the discussion of the 'collapse' of Teotihuacan, resulting in the incorporation of new external and internal factors in the debate, such as a climate crisis, natural disasters, difficulties in the management of the metropolis, internal tensions arising from social inequality within Teotihuacan, regional instability and the rural-urban periphery stress (Lorenzo 1968; Manzanilla 2003a, 2003b; Matos 1996; Millon 1973, 1988; Palerm and Wolf 1972; Siebe et al. 1996; Webb 1978). Besides these factors, the loss of trade routes and prestige of the city, and the emergence of regional elites were also considered key factors in the process of disintegration of the Teotihuacan power and the ideological-political system that sustained it (Cohodas 1989; Litvak 1970, 1978; Sanders 1964, 1965; Sanders and Price 1968).

Later, the collapse of Teotihuacan was also reevaluated in terms of chronology pointing to an earlier date. First Evelyn Rattray (1996), based on radiocarbon dates, redefined the chronology establishing the end of the city around 650 CE. Then, Linda Manzanilla and Ana María Soler placed the date of the 'big fire' in 550–570 CE, mainly relying on several lines of evidence of the fire and destruction detected in the excavations of the compounds of Teopancazco and Xalla led by Manzanilla (2012, 2023). In fact, they developed a systematic method of archaeomagnetic and radiocarbon dating to better define the chronological framework of Teotihuacan (Beramendi et al. 2009; Soler et al. 2006).

Even though the focus in the academic discussion was mainly towards the collapse itself, during the 1990s, some archaeological research projects started to reveal new information regarding post-Teotihuacan phases. In the southeastern area of the Sun Pyramid, a post-Teotihuacan occupation was discovered in artificial tunnels, showing traces of various activities, including domestic ones (Manzanilla 2023; Manzanilla et al. 1996; Moragas 2015). These tunnels were the result of the extraction of building material from the subsoil during the earlier phases of Teotihuacan (Barba and Córdova 2010), pointing to a shift in the use of this area from the Classic to the following 'post-collapse' periods. Moreover, in the space between the Sun Pyramid and the so-called U-shaped platform that surrounds this pyramidal structure, several small structures and rooms from the post-Teotihuacan periods were excavated (Gómez and Cabrera 2006). One of the most remarkable aspects is that some of these structures were identified as *temazcales*, a steam bath used in pre-Hispanic times for ritual, medicinal, and hygienic purposes that continues to this day (Ortega and Álvarez 2008). In Teotihuacan, this type of construction has not been identified for the Classic period, pinpointing to the introduction of new practices and habits. At the same time as these findings, the excavations carried out at La Ventilla, a Teotihuacan neighborhood center with administrative, ritual, and domestic compounds, also revealed a Coyotlatelco occupation that included *temazcales* (Gómez and Cabrera 2006).

These archaeological findings opened a new research line fostering the idea of an external re-settlement process by the Coyotlatelcos, rather than just a sudden abandonment or invasion of the city. This hypothesis was supported by demographic studies -based on ceramic sherds recovered during the Teotihuacan Mapping Project surface survey- that pointed towards the possibility of a total population of 40,000 inhabitants during the immediate period after the fall of the city (Cowgill 1997, 2000). These data pointed out that, even though Teotihuacan experienced a huge demographical shrinkage, during the Epiclassic period, it was still the main center of the Basin of Mexico in terms of population. At the same time as these proposals, new statistical analysis of the distribution of ceramic recovered by the Teotihuacan Mapping Project mainly from surface surveys were performed. Interestingly, the obtained maps showed a wide distribution of Coyotlatelco ceramics throughout the urban area, reinforcing the new perspective of the existence of a post-Teotihuacan occupation of the 'collapsed city' (Cowgill 2013, 2015: 240; Gómez and Cabrera 2006).

In addition, Raúl García (1995), during the excavations of several settlements in the southern of the Basin of Mexico, identified the presence of Coyotlatelco materials even before the fall of the city, suggesting a contemporaneity and coexistence of both cultures (Teotihuacan and Coyotlatelco) with no evidence of conflict between them. As well, Luis Gamboa (1998) detected the same pattern in the peripheral areas of the city of Teotihuacan. This proposal of a possible coexistence between Teotihuacans and Coyotlatelcos in the same space for a limited time period is still being discussed and evaluated (Buckley et al. 2023; Moragas 2005). The data suggest different realities depending on the location within the city, depicting a complex panorama of the last years before the fall of the city and the first ones after this event.

The current perspective depicts a multicausal and complex collapse of Teotihuacan as an urban society, where a coexistence of different cultures has been proved before the fall of the city. Moreover, one of the immediate results of the 'collapse' of the city was a huge population shrinkage, although not a complete abandonment of the city, as we defend in this paper. In fact, the city has continued to be inhabited to the present-day, by different settlers and newcomers with different material cultures. Regarding the post-collapse period, the academia has mainly centered its attention on the Coyotlatelcos and the Epiclassic period. Particularly, the studies have been primarily focused on ceramic analysis (Crider et al. 2007) and its relationship with the Teotihuacan collapse, rather than studying this new phase in a comprehensive approach. Even though these studies have specifically addressed a post-collapse period, this time/culture (Epiclassic/Coyotlatelco) approach has helped to perpetuate the idea of the abandonment of the city in the next periods, particularly during the Early Postclassic phase. In fact, investigations have still focused on the collapse and the immediate phase after this event, but not on the following ones making it difficult to depict a diachronic perspective of the history of Teotihuacan after the Epiclassic.

Around 850 CE, the Mazapa ceramic complex appeared in Teotihuacan. This Mazapa phase also constitutes the beginning of the Early Postclassic period in the Basin of Mexico (850–1150 CE). The Mazapa ceramic complex was initially interpreted as Toltec and related to the city of Tula, about 100 km away from the Teotihuacan Valley in the current state of Hidalgo. However, Destiny Crider (2011) identified a Mazapa variant locally produced at Teotihuacan and pointed to important regional differences. Interactions between Tula and Teotihuacan were significant during this period, being the Classic city a venerable place to the Toltecs (Nichols 2015: 33). The Mazapa phase is the most unknown and unexplored period of the history of Teotihuacan, as Deborah Nichols (2015: 34) stated: 'We do not know much about the organisation of Teotihuacan in the Early Postclassic'. Some references to Mazapa material culture can be found in the scholarly literature, and a few maps of the ceramic distribution based on the Teotihuacan Mapping Project survey have been published showing a substantial change in the distribution pattern between this and the previous periods (Cowgill 2015: 242; Garraty 2006: fig.6; Nichols 2013: fig.2). The investigations led by Linda Manzanilla (2023; et al. 1996) in the tunnels near the Sun Pyramid need to be incorporated in these maps, because these data could modify the general picture of the Mazapa occupation of Teotihuacan, enhancing the importance of this period. However, besides Manzanilla's works, very few specific publications about the Mazapa period have been published until now. This lack of academic interest still promotes the idea of a complete abandonment of Teotihuacan after the collapse or the Epiclassic period, even sometimes depicting a 'lost city'.

However, it is interesting that, despite this fact, a comprehensive view of the archaeological excavations done in Teotihuacan contradicts this idea pointing to a scarce – but existing – settlement, limited to some areas of the Classic city. Our ongoing research supports this idea and also investigates the presence of Mazapa burials in several areas of the city, an aspect of the Mazapa occupation that may be linked to a re-signification of the site that a collective memory it still had, or the value that the remains of the Classic Teotihuacan city likely still had in the minds of the settlers (publications in progress). We hypothesize that it is actually during the Mazapa period that the remains of Teotihuacan, mainly the ruins of the civic-ceremonial center, experienced a significant change in their perception, not only by the local population but also by the emerging powers in the Basin of Mexico.

As for the Middle and Late Postclassic periods (1150–1521 CE), these phases have received slightly more attention from the academic community. Regarding the Postclassic occupation of Teotihuacan, Christopher Garraty (2000, 2006) analyzed the Aztec sherds from the Teotihuacan Mapping Project, and he proposed that during this period the main buildings of the settlement were located around the area of the current cathedral of San Juan Teotihuacan town. This new urban distribution suggests a relocation of the administrative power, and that the pyramids and main buildings of the civic-ceremonial center of the Classic city of Teotihuacan did not have an important role in this period, at least from the local administrative/civil point of view. However, the Classic Teotihuacan center was not completely dismissed in the Postclassic period, as evidence of visits and/or pilgrimages to the Sun Pyramid is visible in the archaeological record. Moreover, excavations at Templo Mayor, the most sacred area of Tenochtitlan, capital city of the Mexica group, currently in Mexico City, have discovered Classic Teotihuacan artifacts, such as funerary masks or sculptures, in some offerings, showing clear evidence about the Aztec looting practices in Teotihuacan (López Luján 2017; López Luján and De Anda 2009). The historical sources, discussed in the next section, also reported these visits and pilgrimages. In addition, some Early Colonial documents, like the *'Relaciones Geográficas'*, mention the location of the new buildings of the Hispanic power in the Teotihuacan Valley unveiling the persistence of the location of the Postclassic center of Teotihuacan between the final stages of the pre-Hispanic period and the Colonial one (Acuña 1986).

Through this overview of the archaeological discourse and the collapse of Teotihuacan, we have dismissed the idea of a complete abandonment of the city, but it is irrefutable that Teotihuacan lost its leadership over time and that the city was not the same after the 'big fire'. This fact has influenced the scholarly research to be more attracted to other emerging centers of power from the Postclassic Central Highlands, such as Otumba in the Teotihuacan Valley, or the abovementioned sites of Tula and Tenochtitlan, the capital city of the Mexica group. In this sense, the history of Teotihuacan during the Postclassic and the beginning of the Colonial period has been marginalised in the archaeological narrative, except for some studies mentioned in previous paragraphs.

Beyond Collapse and Abandonment: Urban Landscape Resignifications and the Written Sources

In this paper, we sustain the idea that, although very much reduced in inhabitants and occupation, Teotihuacan was not completely abandoned after its collapse, instead it was continuously inhabited through different sociopolitical contexts and depicted a changing interaction with the urban remains. Even though after the collapse of the Teotihuacan system the city lost its pan-regional leadership, for generations it was one of the largest centers of the Basin of Mexico. Although the inhabitants of Teotihuacan after the Classic period can be called in archaeological terms as Coyotlatelcos, Mazapas, and Mexicas, considering the associated material culture, they could still be considered Teotihuacans, in the strict sense that they occupied a specific place in the Teotihuacan Valley, which was still related to the city of Teotihuacan.

The abovementioned collapse of the city of Teotihuacan was not exclusively a deurbanisation process but also represented a substantial change in the way the space was perceived over time. The city management and the city itself fell apart, so was its symbolic world expressed in the grid plan and public and private architecture. In this sense, it is very difficult to understand how the Coyotlatelcos and later the Mazapas were able to interpret or re-signify the city remains, such as the main pyramids or the mural paintings decorating the apartment compounds of the Classic Teotihuacan. Without a doubt, new narratives and new meanings of the ruins, in line with the beliefs of the new settlers, must have been created, that unfortunately – at least for the moment – we are not able to reconstruct. During the Late Postclassic, the Aztecs emerged as a new political, military and dominant power in the Basin of Mexico, reinventing and imposing their religious and symbolic worldview. Even the name of Teotihuacan, meaning the city of the gods, the Sun and the Moon Pyramids and the Street of the Dead were all named by the Aztecs. In fact, we do not know what the Teotihuacans called themselves, the pyramids or even the city. As López Luján (2017) states: 'the Nahuas of the 16th c. asserted that the pyramids of the Classic period were built by portentous beings and not by mortal beings…', that 'the Pyramid of the Sun of Teotihuacan could have only been built by gods, giants or mythical people such as Toltecs…', and the whole city of Teotihuacan 'was conceived as the place of origins, the cradle of the Fifth Sun, the origin of the dispersion of the ordinary people'.

The arrival of the Spaniards provides new information about the symbolic meaning of the Teotihuacan ruins that was described in ethnohistorical sources. Both Europeans and Indigenous chroniclers collected and narrated the stories that survived after the dramatic episodes of the conquest of the city of Mexico-Tenochtitlan. One of the most well-known stories is the belief of Teotihuacan as the place of creation of the world. The legend of the Fifth Sun collected by Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, narrates the meeting of the gods in Teotihuacan and the series of events that led to the creation of the Fifth Sun, that is, the world in which the Mexica lived. Bernardino de Sahagún also mentions that Moctezuma, the main ruler of the Mexica, made a pilgrimage every twenty days to Teotihuacan to perform sacrifices and offerings. In this sense, the Aztecs mythicised the ruins of the civic-ceremonial center of Teotihuacan as a sacred landscape and re-signified it as a legitimisation tool.

Another important source of information are the geographical studies commissioned by the king of Spain, Philip II, to better understand and manage the new lands. *The Relaciones Geográficas del siglo XVI: Mexico* ([1580] Acuña 1986) provide detailed descriptions of some of the settlements and other insights into the uses of the land as well as the character of the indigenous populations in the areas conquered by the Spanish crown. In some cases, such as Teotihuacan, the description is supplemented with a map that represents part of the Teotihuacan Valley (including the village of San Juan Teotihuacan and its Cathedral, and the Sun and the Moon pyramids in the center of Classic Teotihuacan), showing that the pyramids where still visible and formed part of the perceived place of the inhabitants. Significantly, the pyramids are identified as the 'Oracle of Moctezuma', suggesting the tie to the Late Postclassic period.

Likewise, more information can be obtained from another important document, the Quinatzin map (c. 1542). This *nahua* pictorial history allows us to contextualize the role of Teotihuacan during the Late Postclassic. Specifically, the Quinatzin map depicts the palace of the ruler of Texcoco in the Basin of Mexico during the Late Postclassic, where two nobles appear prominently. One of them is the ruler of Otumba and the other one, the ruler of Teotihuacan (Boone 2000: 192). The relationship between all the cultural groups from the Basin of Mexico is complex and not well understood yet. But it is remarkable the position of the Teotihuacan ruler on the map stating its importance during the Postclassic period. However, this prominence is clearly underrated in the archaeological studies, reiterating the need for further investigations.

Other Colonial documents significant for the comprehension of Teotihuacan are the *'Tomas de posesión de los caciques de San Juan de Teotihuacan'*. During the Colonial period, every time a local chief (*cacique*) died the successor had to legitimise their right to inherit the lands through a legal but also ritual act. The *cacique* or their delegate literally took possession of the lands walking through them and demonstrating their rights on the lands to the local (indigenous) population. All these acts had to be recorded to legitimize the ownership of the land. Therefore, we now have a bulk of documents with descriptions of the routes and the landscape that sometimes include mentions of the ruins of Teotihuacan (the ancestors), as part of the possessions.

All this information gives hints on several important aspects. A key one is the persistence of the ruins: despite the time passing, they were present in the daily landscape of the inhabitants of the Valley. In the 16th–17th centuries, some of the ruins of the city were still visible and the pyramids were already transformed into mounds (Figure 10.5). On the other hand, the fact that the ruins were mentioned also meant that they still had 'a value', mainly for the indigenous chiefs. The ruins are also an element that links the political power with the past and reminds the indigenous population of their leadership over these lands regardless of the imposition of the new colonial order.

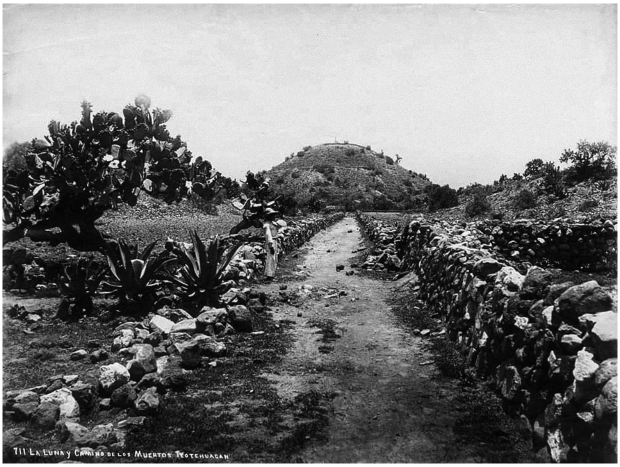


Fig 10.5 View of the Moon Pyramid before its excavation, c. 1918. This picture shows the transformation of the pyramids into mounds (Picture: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia de México, Mediateca INAH, CC BY-NC {Hyperlink http://mediateca.inah.gob.mx/islandora_74/islandora/object/fotografia%3A434881 }, accessed: 23/11/24).

Concluding Remarks

Perceptions of the city's abandonment have persisted in the archaeological narrative – sometimes unconsciously – to the present-day. However, although we do not want to dismiss the idea of a crucial change in the city, in this paper, we have tried to challenge the idea of a complete abandonment of Teotihuacan after its collapse to the Early Colonial period. Even though the archaeological evidence is still too scarce, the material culture indicates a persistence in the occupation of the city, although much smaller. On the other hand, ethnohistorical sources point towards another direction where the prestige and symbolic weight of post-Teotihuacan was higher than the one perceived by the archaeological studies. This can be the result of the fact that the research interest has been focused almost entirely on the Classic period rather than generating a comprehensive diachronic perspective of the built environment. Likewise, it must be considered that we, researchers, are also narrators of a way of interpreting the past and that we are not alien to our own social constructions.

Likewise, the archaeological narrative correlates with the evolution of the theoretical models from the first cultural-historical assumptions and diffusionist/invasion mechanisms followed by interpretations based on historical materialism and processual perspectives. Thus, to understand the academic construction of the Teotihuacan collapse we must assess the different interpretations within their theoretical frameworks. For years, research questions have focused on the causes and consequences of the collapse of Teotihuacan and the subsequent abandonment of the city rather than understanding the periods after it. Furthermore, the research addressing the post-collapse periods has been more focused on the characterization of the material culture (mainly ceramics) than incorporating into the discussion the study of the daily life of the people inhabiting the area of the Classic city.

In sum, after the collapse and the obvious demographic shrinkage, some areas of the city continued to be inhabited, while the center and the main pyramids still had a ritual and symbolic importance. In fact, there are aspects that speak to us about the resilience of the remaining populations as well as the persistence and regeneration of Teotihuacan as a place. Therefore, we advocate for future archaeological research centered in the post-Teotihuacan phases or at least with a diachronic perspective to advance the state of the art of the post-Teotihuacan phases beyond pottery studies.

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(Re) Settling Afterwards

11. **Travelling Trees:** a Cartographic Study of Palatine Resettlement in 18th Century Irish Plantation Landscapes

Julia van Duijvenvoorde

Keywords Forest; Landscape; Colonialism; Reappropriation; Resettlement

Abstract Epitomised by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, current discourses about 'resilience' are drawing more and more attention to a community's ability to absorb shock as well as to adapt and diversify the sources of their livelihood in the face of precarity. While resilience-centred programmes are in many cases necessary and empowering, they can also lead to the over-shifting of responsibility onto vulnerable communities if not accompanied by critical reflections on the positionality and impact of local authorities in the aftermath of devastating events, be they of an economic, environmental or political nature. In light of such discourses as well as the recent increase in war- and poverty-induced migrations, I ask the following question. In what ways have the political and ideological interests of immigration authorities shaped migrant resettlement in the landscape? To contribute to the broader ongoing conversation between the disciplines of Environmental History and Migration Studies about landscape, migration and power, I conduct a critical cartographic analysis of settlements built by Palatine migrants in County Limerick, Ireland in the early 18th century through the lens of one of the most instrumentalised landscape elements of Early Modern Europe-the forest. Often cited by historians and contemporaries as the chief reason behind their economic success, the pre-migration environmental mentality that the Palatines carried within them allowed them to adapt and transpose efficient and productive ways of working the land. However, it should not be forgotten that the relatively privileged position the Palatines held in the colonial socio-cultural hierarchy as a Protestant minority in Ireland also gave them the opportunity to more freely reappropriate the surrounding landscape in the midst of the strict top-down landscape directives set by the British Monarchy.

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Landscape, Migration & Power

'They are very industrious, and in consequence are much happier and better fed, clothed and lodged than the Irish peasants. We must not however, conclude from hence that all is owing to this; their being independent farmers and having leases, are circumstances which will create industry' (Wollaston Hutton 1892: 378). In a decidedly more conciliatory and non-partisan tone than many of his British contemporaries, agriculturalist and social commentator Arthur Young wrote one of the most detailed descriptions of Palatine settlements in County Limerick, Ireland during his travels in the late 18th century. At a time when poverty, malnutrition and famine in Ireland were largely attributed to the 'lazy' and 'uncivilised' nature of its Catholic inhabitants (Williams 2008), the mention of favourable economic circumstances (i.e. access to land and leases) in explaining the difference between Palatine and Irish settlements almost comes in as a surprise. Too often, the economic 'success' of migrant communities in the past and present has been assigned to their 'arduous, resilient and industrious' spirit, a tendency that gets amplified and crystallised when playing a part in greater foundational nation-building myths such as pioneers pushing the boundaries of 'civilisation' on the American Western frontier. As a result, responsibility and accountability for resettlement is shifted onto the migrant while the (un)favourable host landscape created by local immigration authorities is naturalised and taken-for-granted.

With this in mind, I dedicate this article to what I find to be a particularly relevant historical case-study to add to the ongoing conversation between the disciplines of Environmental History and Migration Studies about landscape, migration and power (Armiero 2017; Crosby 1986; Davis 2007; Grove 1995; MacKenzie 1988; Sunseri 2002; Sivaramakrishnan 1999; Worster 1979): the relocation of Palatine migrants to Ireland by the British government in 1709. Although migrant relocation projects are all inherently political, this one was especially ideologically charged and politically instrumentalised: in a post-Reformation Europe divided along religious lines, the mass migration out of the Palatinate (or Pfalz in German), a region that had long been targeted by the armies of King Louis XIV, was quickly seized as an opportunity for English monarchs to once again step in as the righteous saviour in the face of Catholic oppression (Backhouse 1991; Olson 2000; Stanwood 2019). Adding to the politically charged nature of the whole episode is the fact that the Crown chose to relocate the Palatine migrants to County Limerick in Ireland, a land that by then had already long been subjected to England's colonial project, particularly since the instituting of the Munster Plantations in the 1580s with land confiscations, newly appointed Anglo-Protestant landowners, discriminatory penal laws, and unfavourable leases it imposed on the Irish Catholic majority (O'Connor 1987; Newman 1964). Beyond the analytical value it presents as an extreme form of top-down population management, the 18th century British colonial apparatus that the Palatine relocation scheme took place in presents another historiographical advantage shared by most colonial contexts: that of extensive cartographic records[1].

It is on the basis of these extensive cartographic records that I ask the following question: How did the political and ideological interests of the Anglo-Protestant landowning elite shape the resettlement of Palatine migrants in the 18th century Irish plantation landscape? Environmental historians have long illustrated stories of asymmetrical power relations by focusing on one or several policies imposed on the local landscape by colonial, imperial or ruling authorities such as intensive agricultural exploitation, targeted nature conservation policies or the introduction of new species of fauna and flora to cite a few (Cronon 1983; Grove 1995; Salaman 1986; Damodaran 2012). Because of the immense breadth of the British colonial project's environmental impact on the Irish landscape, I also choose to tackle the above-mentioned question through the lens of a particular landscape feature- one that historically has been one of the most instrumentalised by political elites across Europe: the forest. Forests have long been objects of power and control, both for the economic value of the materials they produce as well as the strategic/military/political potential of the visual qualities they carry. This held especially true in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe when a large majority of economic and military activities were still dependent on wood production, despite large-scale wood shortages becoming increasingly frequent (Küster 1998). Beyond its importance on the macro level, the forest was also an incredibly omnipresent and multi-functional environment where a range of micro-level daily activities were carried out by local inhabitants across all professions (Groenewoudt 2022; Küster 1998; Volk 2015). Given the pivotal and varied roles that the forest played in 18th century Europe, looking at the Irish landscape through such a lens therefore allows to fluidly travel between the perspective of the Anglo-Protestant elite, the Irish Catholic majority and Palatine migrant minority.

Before getting into the core of my cartographic analysis of Palatine settlements in County Limerick, I lay down essential methodological and historical building blocks upon which my argument rests. First, I briefly recount the circumstances of the Palatine migration and relocation to Ireland. I then shed light on the colonial context in which the analysed cartographic material was created, as the intent of both the mapmaker and commissioner shape the form and content of the final map (Wood 2002). In the core of my analysis, I subsequently explore how the deforestation and reforestation policies put in place by different generations of the Anglo-Protestant colonial elite impacted Palatine resettlement in the Irish rural landscape. While the landscape mentality that the Palatines carried with them from the southwest of Germany was crucial in allowing them to maximise the utility of the land, it is the economic and political advantages conferred on them by their positionality as Protestant migrants within the local Irish plantation landscape which enabled them to beneficially re-appropriate the strict deforestation and reforestation policies and thus activate their pre-migration embodied knowledge.

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[1] Indeed, during the Renaissance, scientific advances such as new geometries of measurement developed in parallel with expansionist and imperialist foreign policies, thus starting the long-intertwined histories of cartography and colonialism (Edney 2020; Blakemore & Harley 1980).

A story of Early Modern mass migration

'Unlike many eighteenth-century migrations, this was not a carefully considered and well-planned movement emerging from a compact group of closely-knit villages. It was instead sprawling, sudden, and almost unthinking [...]' (Otterness 1999: 9). Though the migration movement from the region of the Palatinate in southwest Germany was far from being made up of a coherent and cohesive community as Early Modern historian Philipp Otterness points out, the participants of this migration wave will be known under the banner of 'Palatine' for the purpose of this research. While not geographically accurate, the term 'Palatine' highlights the community that this disparate group of individuals later became, not the least because of shared experiences of dislocation and relocation, starting with the combination of circumstances that led to their decision to leave their home during the early spring of 1709.

'We the poor distressed Palatines, whose utter ruin was occasioned by the merciless cruelty of a bloody enemy, the French [...] not only dispossessed us of all support, but inhumanely burnt our houses to the ground, where being deprived of all shelter, we were turned into the open fields, and there drove with our families, to seek what shelter we could find, being obliged to make the cold earth our lodgings, and the clouds our covering' (Simmendiger 1962: 20). This excerpt from a petition to Queen Anne of England in June 1709 gives a direct insight into the type of discourse that the Palatines presented to the local immigration authorities upon their arrival in London after a long and tiresome journey down the Rhine and across the North Sea. Though here turned into an intentionally emotive hyperbole and pathetic fallacy, the consequences of Louis XIV's threefold policy of aggressive defence[2] during the Nine-Year War (1688–1697) and later during the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714) must have been keenly felt by the Palatines in the years prior to their migration (Cénat 2005: 99–101). Indeed, these war-time practices only further impoverished an already struggling local population. Following the example of Louis XIV's absolute monarchy, an extremely rigid feudal system still reigned in 17th century southwest Germany which included heavy taxation and mandatory military service. Not only did that system severely limit opportunities for individual innovation, economic expansion and adaptation in the event of crop failures but it also forced the local population to absorb the cost of military conflicts (Wokeck 1999).

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[2] To the destruction of fortifications were added practices of quartering, billeting and, in the event of non-cooperation, substantial landscape devastation - the combination of all three military strategies creating a general atmosphere of insecurity and fear even for those whose homes, productive fields and forests had not directly suffered from Louis XIV's tragically famous 'politique de la terre brûlée' (Cénat 2005: 99–101)

No matter how troubling the hardships induced by decades of war and oppressive feudalism, most local inhabitants nevertheless stayed put, repeatedly and tirelessly reconstructing their settlements in the devastated landscapes of the Palatinate (Dosquet 2018:128). However, the poverty and hunger brought about by the Great Frost of 1708 proved to be one obstacle too many for some. While these circumstances planted the seed of discontent around the Palatinate, it is the hope stemming from rumours of free passages across the Atlantic and access to large and lush expanses of land in Queen Anne of England's North American colonies that gave some Palatines the ambition to leave their homeland and undertake a long and tiresome journey to London (Otterness 2013). To the Palatines' dismay, the British authorities did not seem to have been expecting them in such numbers and as a consequence, many had to make do with staying in overcrowded rooms or makeshift camps for months on end after their arrival in London. With thousands of Palatines crowding the city and tensions rising high amongst local inhabitants, the Board of Trade had to find a solution, and quick (Otterness 2013; Olson 2000). Although the Queen had not originally planned on extending her charity to the people of the war- and poverty-stricken Palatinate, she was swift to make an opportunity of a burden following the example that her predecessors had set[3]. Although the migration wave from the Palatinate was not triggered by direct religious persecution, Queen Anne's charity was nevertheless strategically extended to the 'poor distressed Protestant Palatines' similarly to Flemish and Huguenots migrants before them to serve the interests of the Crown in the spirit of the then reigning populationist philosophy. Because of their arrival in impressively large numbers, rough reception by Londoners and perceived lower socio-economic status compared to their Flemish and Huguenot counterparts (Olson 2000), immigration authorities destined the Palatines to be relocated on the margins of the British Empire. But where to settle them exactly?

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[3] Indeed, Queen Elizabeth I welcomed subsequent waves of Flemish and Huguenot refugees who had suffered from religious persecution from Spanish and French Catholic rule and employing their pre-migration knowledge to boost England's cloth industry (Backhouse 1991: 30). King William III later supported the arrival of an even larger wave of Huguenots after the revocation of the Edit de Nantes in 1685 for equally economically and politically instrumental motives (Stanwood 2019)

For months, the Board of Trade considered different possibilities for relocation, including Jamaica, Barbados and Saint Christopher's. Although Jamaica had been considered too hot a climate for German migrants to adapt to during a smaller German migration wave in 1708, the Board of Trade seemed to be willing to overlook this environmental factor a year later (Otterness 2013: 69). Finally, after much deliberation, the Board decided to send a first group of Palatines to Anglo-Protestant estates around County Limerick in Ireland to reinforce the rural Protestant presence and increase agricultural productivity in the Munster Plantations and a second group to the Hudson River Valley in North America to create a buffer with the nearby French troops as well as to take part in a naval store production scheme (Knittle 1937). Those who did not fit into this carefully crafted narrative of noble Protestant solidarity, i.e. the Catholics amongst the group, were forcibly excluded from the relocation scheme and sent back to the Palatinate.

Seeing the immense breadth of the 1709 Palatine relocation scheme in Ireland[4], I choose to focus this chapter on two Palatine settlements in County Limerick, which, thanks to their different chronology, geography and ownership history, illustrate various aspects of colonial forest-management directives. Ballingrane was the largest and most economically successful of the three settlements that were built by the Palatines upon arrival on Thomas Southwell's estate around the market town of Rathkeale in 1709 (O'Connor 1989: 39). The estate had already been in Protestant hands since the establishment of the Munster Plantation in 1582 (Trinity College Dublin 2024). Around the mid-18th century, a number of Palatine families left the original settlements around Rathkeale in large part due to overpopulation (O'Connor 1989: 50–65). Developed on the lands of Castle Oliver, the village of Glenosheen was part of this second wave of settlement. The Oliver Estate, previously known as Cloghnotefoy (named after Otway's Rock), was forcibly forfeited by the Irish Catholic Fitz-Harris family to Robert Oliver, an Anglo-Protestant Cromwellian Captain, in 1666 (Trinity College Dublin 2024). As opposed to Ballingrane, Glenosheen is situated on the margins of the county, further away from the major commercial routes of the River Shannon and the city of Limerick, on the poorer soils of the Ballyhoura Mountain foothills.

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[4] 821 families comprising of 3,073 individuals across more than 40 Anglo-Protestant landed estates (O'Connor 1989: 19)

The hidden power of maps, spatialising possible futures

‘It is the outsider who requires a map in order to occupy and own the local landscape and the image of the landscape’ (Smith 2003: 72). Maps and mapping have always been tools of control, allowing authorities to record a vast amount of spatial information and therefore oversee large expanses of land simultaneously as well as investing them with the power to naturalise their own worldview (Edney 2020; Wood 2002; Blakemore & Harley 1980; Anderson 2006). It comes as no surprise then that the first comprehensive attempt at mapping Ireland on a country-wide scale was carried out by the English in their efforts to conquer and colonise the island – a three-hundred-year period known as the Protestant Ascendancy[5]. The two sets of historical maps I use to underpin my analysis are both undeniable and irrevocable products of the British colonial project.

The first set of maps that I examine was created during the Down Survey of Ireland. Attempts at establishing colonies of Anglo-Protestant settlers in Ireland during the first half of the 17th century had only been partially successful due to a high number of rebellions from the local Irish Catholic population. However, in 1649, General Oliver Cromwell famously set foot in Ireland with the mission of crushing the rebellion and after a series of bloody and ruthless campaigns, permanently dispossessed many of the remaining Irish Catholic landowners (Laffey 2017). Despite this sweeping victory, one problem remained for General Cromwell: how to efficiently redistribute the dispossessed land amongst Anglo-Protestant settlers? To solve this issue, a Surveyor General for Land was appointed in 1653 – after a failed attempt from Benjamin Worsely to carry out this task, William Petty stepped in and in doing so gave rise to the Down Survey of Ireland as we know it[6]. Rather than focusing on the forfeited land only, Petty surveyed the entire island, including a variety of data such as land quality or the name and religion of the landowners prior to and following confiscation – all of which would greatly contribute towards the solidification and systemisation of the British colonising endeavour in Ireland (Laffey 2017).

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[5] The term Protestant Ascendancy denotes a time period characterized by processes of land confiscation and corresponding forcible land transfer from Gaelic and Irish Catholic lords to the English elite. This period is generally considered to have started with the first plantation projects of the early 17th century, reached a peak in the course of the 18th century and ended with the Land Act of 1903.

[6] The Down Survey consisted of surveys and maps on the county, barony and parish levels which have now all been inventoried and made accessible by Trinity College Dublin’s Down Survey digital project.

The second set of maps I analyse is the product of a survey that was carried out between 1829 and 1842 by the Ordnance Survey of Ireland (OSI) which was then revised over the course of the following decades, giving rise to the publication of a second, final edition at the turn of the century. Created in 1824 as an agency of the British Ministry of Defence, the OSI continued to operate as a British institution until the establishment of the new Irish Free State in 1924 (Tailte Éireann 2024). According to the British authorities at the time, the first edition maps of the OSI were created to help re-evaluate the 'county tax' which funded roads and bridges. However, unofficial motivations for mapping the whole of Ireland anew included a growing awareness of rural unrest in the Irish countryside as well as a fear of a potential French invasion (Smith 2003). The mapping was done under the direction of Superintendent Colonel Colby, himself under the official command of the central office of the Ordnance Survey (OS) in London (Ordnance Survey 2024). Soldier-surveyors dressed in noticeably bright red coats were sent from the central office to map the Irish landscape, recruiting local inhabitants for short periods of time.

As highlighted by Benedict Anderson amongst others, maps have historically been one part of a greater colonial apparatus seeking to not only assert but also legitimise and ultimately naturalise its control over the 'other'. Rather than simplifying, codifying and representing a single objective reality, 'a map anticipated spatial reality, not vice versa. In other words, a map was a model for, rather than a model of, what it purported to represent… It had become a real instrument to concretize projections on the earth's surface' (Winichakul 1988: 310). An example often used to illustrate the effect of imperialist bias on the topographic accuracy of historical maps is the total absence of any traces of Native American occupation on cartographic representations of colonial North America by English mapmakers, giving the impression of a 'terra nullius' that was free for European settlers inhabit and cultivate (Wood 2002: 151). Similar topographic and toponymic distortions concerning the OSI have already been pointed out by anthropologist Angèle Smith in her article on 'Landscape Representation: Place and identity in 19th century Ordnance Survey Maps of Ireland'[7], providing a valuable basis for further critical cartographic analyses to build upon.

As a result, maps are often disregarded as primary sources for historical research due to such geometric, chronometric, toponymic and topographic inaccuracies. However, if one considers maps as authored works rather than simple repositories of information, these inaccuracies can become analytical gateways into the world view of the commissioner and map maker, or in this case, Britain's colonial elite. Furthermore, looking at maps of the Down Survey and Ordnance Survey through a postcolonial lens, that is by keeping in mind the positionality of Palatine migrants within the 18th century British colonial hierarchy, allows for two different analytical processes to unfold. The first consists of forming more nuanced interpretations of visible cartographic traces of Palatine settlements in the Irish landscape and the second of discerning what has been rendered invisible in the cartographic landscape. In short, I purposefully choose to use these two sets of maps for their potential to reveal the extent of the spatial aspirations of the British colonial project and possible implications for Palatine resettlement.

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[7] Along with the anglicization of Irish toponyms came many topographic biases during the making of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland including in the representation of churches. If the symbol of a church is not accompanied by any specific description on the map, one can assume that it denotes an Anglican church as the latter was considered Ireland's church by default by the mapping authorities though the majority of the population remained Roman Catholic (Smith 2003: 76).

Palatine resettlement amidst shifting colonial landscapes

The arrival of the Palatines in Ireland in 1709 sits at the confluence of two sets of oppositional but complementary landscape directives imposed by the Anglo-Protestant elite in the Irish countryside. On the one hand, the period 1600–1800 was defined by a major trend of deforestation – corresponding to an initial colonising effort from the first generations of English settlers of the Protestant Ascendancy to reduce the former socio-cultural Irish rural landscape to a politically predictable and economically viable tabula rasa. On the other hand, the period 1700–1850 saw a rise in reforestation – corresponding to a later stage of colonisation during which Anglo-Protestant settlers sought to reshape the Irish rural landscape to reflect their own values and ideals (Smyth 1996). In both cases, they were landscape directives introduced as part of a greater apparatus aiming to tighten control and assert power over the local Irish Catholic population while legitimising the presence of the Anglo-Protestant landowning gentry[8]. Seeing the inextricably ideological and political role of the Palatines in the British colonial project as 'industrious Protestant Brethren' (Defoe 1709), the strict deforestation and reforestation directives simultaneously impacted the German migrants' resettlement in terms of both the restrictions and surveillance but also the economic and symbolic advantages they implied.

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[8] Various discriminatory acts, commonly called the Penal Laws, were passed in the course of the 16th and 17th century aiming to exclude the Irish Catholic majority from various aspects of public life, ranging from voting and teaching to owning land, therefore pushing a great part of the population into extreme precarity.

1. Deforestation in the Irish rural landscape

Much of Ireland's forest coverage was destroyed during the course of the Protestant Ascendancy. In fact, only 1/50th of Ireland was forested in 1800 against 1/8th two centuries earlier (Figure 11.1, MacCracken 1971: 36). However, because of Ireland's great variation in geology and rainfall, forest coverage across the whole island was far from consistent even prior to the 17th century, resulting in extensive treeless areas such as the raised bogs of Central Ireland and the rocky mountains of the West coast (Aalen et al. 2011). County Limerick, on the other hand, is situated in one of Ireland's most fertile regions which in Tudor times was home to an 'almost legendary forest coverage' (MacCracken 1971: 37). As time went on and forests were cleared, the region became known as the Golden Vale and was reputed for the quality of its soil and its flourishing dairy farms. MacCracken's extensive work on the evolution of forests 1600–1800 in Ireland offers a more precise insight into the local forests that covered county Limerick around 1600 (Figure 11.1): according to her research, large expanses of forest stretched in the South of Limerick from Feenagh to Broadford and from Newcastle through Ardagh to Shanagolden and Loghill on the coast. Woods were also found around Rathkeale connecting with forests near Charleville and Kilmallock, reaching the Shannon and Pallaskenry. North of Croom, there were intermittent woods and bogs all the way to Limerick City. Lastly, large forests covered the area surrounding the Ballyhoura mountains in the South of the County. From these observations, it sounds likely that both Ballingrane and Glenosheen profited from extensive forest coverage at least until the 1600s as they are located near Rathkeale and the Ballyhoura hills respectively (MacCracken 1971: 44–45).

a. Clearing the land

In the existing literature on the history of Glenosheen it is recounted that the Palatines, when they were granted land in the 1760s, had to first clear their plots of a rich oak forest before they could settle there (O'Connor 1989: 63), coinciding with MacCracken's descriptions of extensive historic forest coverage around the Ballyhoura Mountains. The absence of the townland of Glenosheen on the Down Survey of Ireland's Coshlea Barony map (Figure 11.2) further suggests that the area had indeed been largely uninhabited and uncultivated until the arrival of the Palatines. In the case of Ballingrane on the other hand, there is a noticeable silence in the historiography concerning the initial clearing and settling processes undertaken by the Palatines. While the arrival of the German migrants marked a sharp increase in population density within the townland of Ballingrane, 40 Irish people are nevertheless recorded as living there in the 1659 Census. Furthermore, the irregular and varied field pattern in the townland suggests a longer period of inhabitation, potentially tying into the nearby Stoneville Demesne's equally long history (Mhearain 2004: 71). In any case, the act of clearing and preparing the land for cultivation must have felt familiar to the Palatines, though

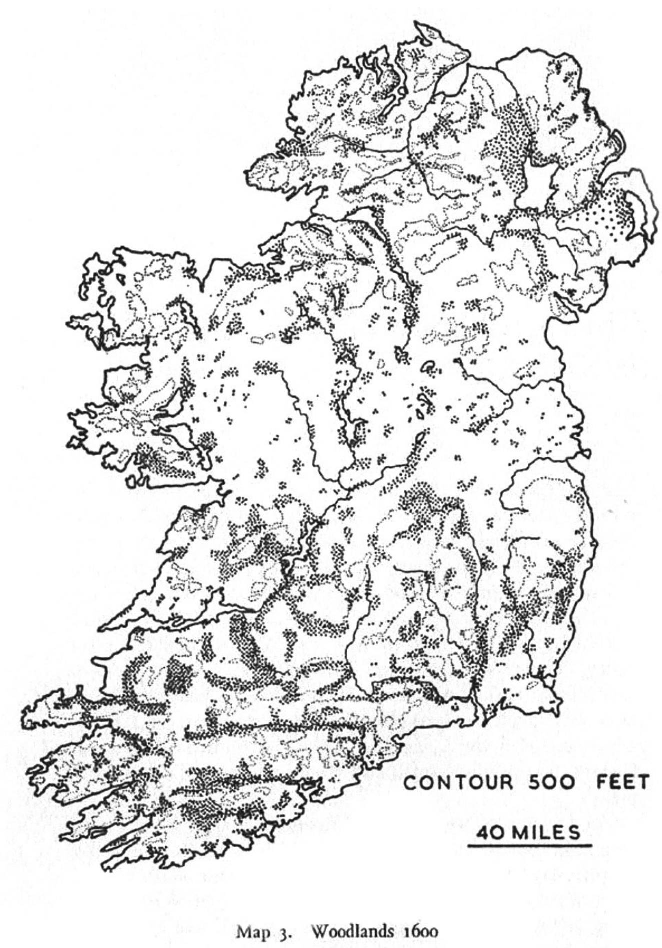

Fig 11.1
Woodland Coverage in Ireland circa 1600. The Irish Woods Since Tudor Times. Eileen McCracken. ISBN: 0 7153 5008 0. David & Charles.

carried out in a different climatic and topographic environment. Indeed, similarly to the rest of Europe, Early Modern forests in the Southwest of Germany were still the ever-changing spaces that they had been for hundreds of years, put through cycles of deforestation and reforestation by the local population in response to the shifting needs of surrounding villages (Volk 2015).

Beyond confirming that Glenosheen was likely wooded upon the arrival of the Palatines, the Barony map (Figure 11.2) also allows for a glimpse into the prevailing mercantile and productivist forest mentalities (Küster 1998) that drove much of the Protestant Ascendancy's deforestation policies. Indeed, the whole area south of Cloghnotefoy (later known as Castle Oliver) where Glenosheen was later built by the Palatines is there described as 'unprofitable mountains'. The categorisation of pre-Palatine Glenosheen as 'unproductive' is further highlighted by the information

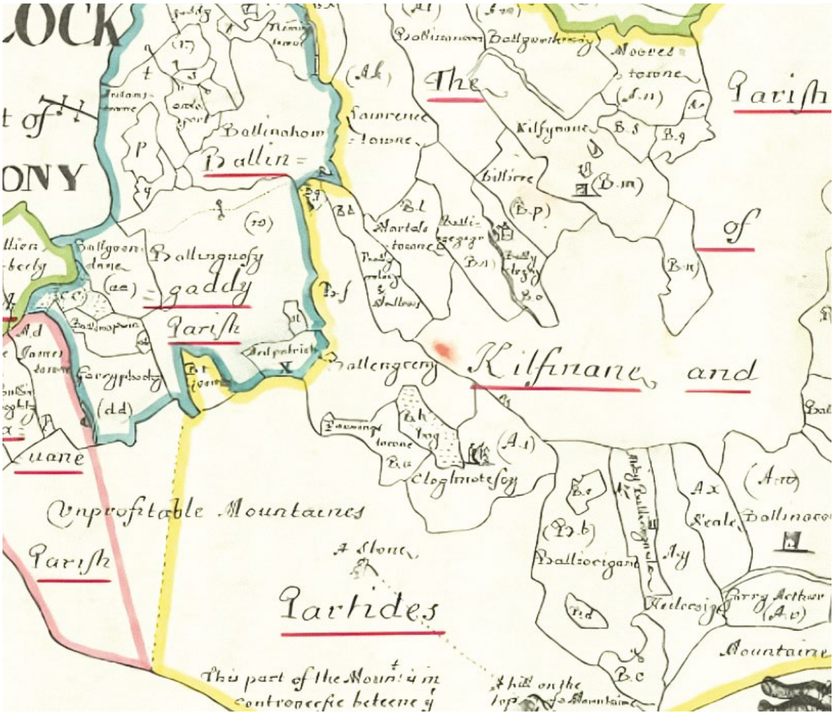
The
Parish
Ballin=
gaddy
Parish
of
Kilfinane
and
Unprofitable Mountaines
Parish
Partides
A Stone
This part of the Mountaine in controversie betwene
A hill on the top of the Mountaine
Mountaine

Fig 11.2 Coshlea Barony Map, Down Survey of Ireland, 1670. Trinity College Dublin. https://downsurvey.tchpc.tcd.ie/landowners.php. Accessed March 2024.

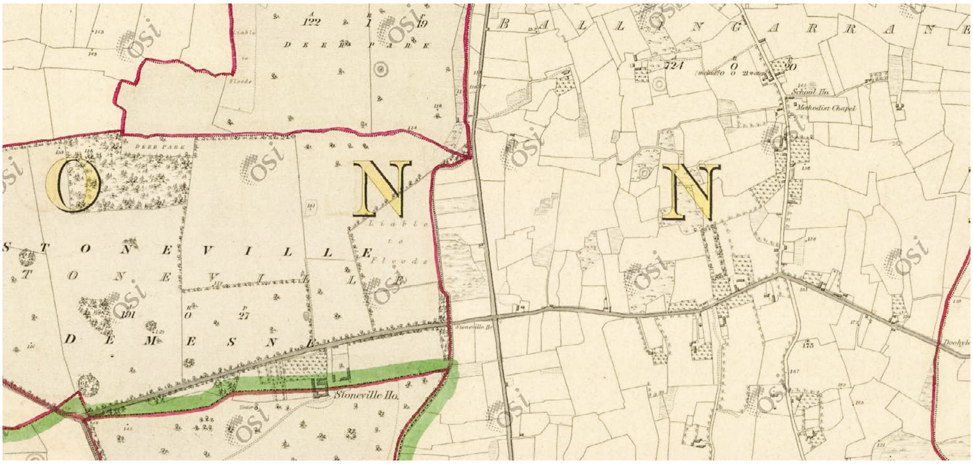
Deer Park
Stoneville Demesne
Stoneville Ho.
Ballingarrane
School Ho.
Methodist Chapel

Fig 11.3 Map of Ballingrane Townland. Ordnance Survey Ireland. First Edition. © Tailte Éireann, Copyright Permit No. MP 002324.

Tailte Éireann
Clárúchán, Luacháil, Suirbhéireacht
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attached to the forced land transaction from the Fitzharris line to the Oliver line in 1666. Indeed, it is stated that the townland of Glenosheen only included 17 acres of profitable land, representing a very small portion of its entire surface which extends over 770 acres (Trinity College Dublin 2024).

While the economic benefits of clearing and increasing the productivity of the land went to the British elite, the act of clearing the land nevertheless also benefitted the Palatines as it placed them comfortably high within the colonial social hierarchy compared to their Irish Catholic neighbours. Bringing the Palatines as soldiers to battle against the wilderness only served to reinforce the already-existing colonial binary vision of the socio-natural order that diametrically opposed Protestantism / Industriousness / Productive Lands to Catholicism / Laziness / Wasteland (Williams 2008). Organised and framed in such a way, deforestation programs allowed British landlords to increase their control over the rural Irish landscape not only through the economic benefits they yielded, but also through their ability to further marginalise the Catholic majority by setting them against a constructed foil. Perhaps more importantly than placing them higher up in the British colonial hierarchy, participation in the construction of this mental and physical tabula rasa allowed the Palatines to forge a place of their own and gain a sense of ownership in the Irish rural landscape which, more than three hundred years on, is still keenly felt by local Palatine descendants in county Limerick.

b. Inhabiting the open

Despite the beneficial impact that the process of deforesting and clearing the land in itself had on Palatine resettlement, the resulting open landscape also presented the newcomers with a harsh reality. Prior to the Palatines' arrival, the creation of an open landscape had already constituted an important part of England's military strategy during the initial phases of the conquest and colonisation of Ireland (Williams 2008: 129). By removing forests and opening up the landscape completely, the Crown aimed to have greater visibility and control over the remaining 'woodkerns', displaced Irish Catholic autochthons who were said to organise rebellions against the English under the cover of the woods (MacCracken 1971: 28). Though not explicitly carried out with the same military goals in mind, the later deforestation programs of the Protestant Ascendancy such as the one executed by the Palatines in Glenosheen had similarly Foucauldian consequences on the entire rural population.

Although the first edition maps created by the OSI date back to more than a hundred years after the Palatines' arrival in County Limerick, they nevertheless offer a vivid insight into the extent of the openness of the 18th century deforested landscape that Palatine settlements found themselves in. Around Ballingrane (Figure 11.3), the only woods recorded on the map are those of 'Big House' estates and their corresponding demesnes with Stoneville Demesne to the west, Nantinan House to the north, Beechmount House to the south and Cappagh House to the east. Around Glenosheen (Figure 11.4), a similar situation is to be observed: most of the woods marked on the map other than the woods directly surrounding Castle Oliver are in fact early results of later reforestation programs which started in the 1830s. Although the deforestation program carried out by the Palatines upon their arrival on the Oliver Estate in the 1760s started with the clearing of 6 small plots on either side of a main road, it is clear looking at OSI first edition maps that the programs amounted to the near total disappearance of the area's previous forest coverage outside of the manor house's surrounding demesne. The exclusive concentration of forests within the demesnes of the Anglo-Protestant landowning class impacted surrounding Palatine settlements in two major ways.

Firstly, the total disappearance of woodlands beyond the boundaries of the demesne forced local farmers and rural inhabitants to carry out all of their day-to-day activities in the open landscape. Before their departure from the southwest of Germany, it must have been common for the Palatines to go to the forest for a variety of reasons ranging from the cutting of wood for fuel and construction to the grazing of cattle (Volk 2015). This transition to an entirely open landscape therefore not only represented a partial shift in agricultural methods for Palatine farmers, but also gave

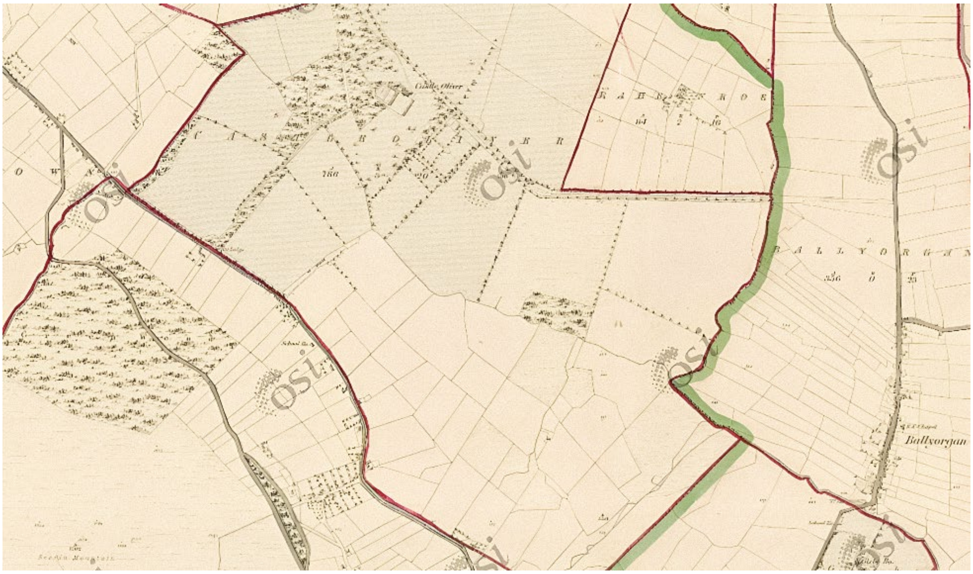

Fig 11.4 Map of Glenosheen Townland. Ordnance Survey Ireland. First Edition. © Tailte Éireann, Copyright Permit No. MP 002324.

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the landlords the opportunity to oversee their work constantly and more easily than in their native multi-functional and fluid woodlands. The cartographic image of tenant villages in the midst of the open landscape set against the wooded, enclosed and therefore concealed demesne in both Ballingrane and Glenosheen townlands conjures up much of the principles of panopticism laid out by Michel Foucault in his seminal *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison:* 'power should be visible and unverifiable. Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that may always be so.' (Foucault 1995: 201). This sense of surveillance was likely felt even more intensely in Glenosheen where Castle Oliver stood across the valley, fulfilling a function close to that of a watchtower.

Secondly, the extensive deforestation programmes put in place by the first generations of the Protestant Ascendancy outside of manor house grounds rendered a large part of the population dependent on the landed gentry for their wood supplies. Though this dependency could have proven to be an equalising factor between the Irish Catholic and Palatine Protestant populations, it is clear from the Castle Oliver estate management papers that Irish Catholics were disproportionately represented on the lists of tenants who owed the Oliver family money for the purchase of timber. Nevertheless, in living in the open landscape, the Palatines also suffered from another part of the ceaseless colonial surveillance apparatus which went hand in hand with the cartographic tool: the census (Anderson 2006; Foucault 1995). While the censusing of trees did not have a direct impact on the physical make-up of the surrounding landscape, it was a constant and insidious reminder of the infinite reach of the Anglo-Protestant elite's watchful eye. Furthermore, the census had the effect of crystallising asymmetrical power relations so much so as to rewrite acts of dominion into acts of charity: 'Mr. Oliver gave without rent all potatoes that had been dug and buried in holes before the expiration of the lease. He forgave the rent to such as he heard were objects of charity' (National Library of Ireland, MS 10,930). Though the deforestation programs introduced during the early stages of the Protestant Ascendancy had a crushing effect on the local Irish Catholic population for the economic dependency and landscape of surveillance they created, they had a more ambiguous impact on the Palatine community who for the generations to come was to be caught in a state of limbo between colonised and coloniser.

2. Reforestation in the Irish rural landscape

After an initial period of deconstructing and exploiting the Irish rural landscape, there came a desire amongst British colonisers towards the end of the 18th century to shape the landscape in such a way as to embody the 'new civilisation' (Smyth 1996: 57) that they had brought to Ireland. In this vein, the Irish countryside witnessed the abandonment or destruction of many long-standing fortified tower houses and their subsequent replacement with 'Big Houses' – large manor houses surrounded by demesnes of monumental tree lanes, gardens, deer parks and woods of all sorts (Figure 11.6). Secondly, the supporting farming communities saw changes both in the form and function of their settlements: on top of being tasked with improving the agricultural productivity of the land, farmers were now also expected to participate in the building and maintaining of carefully planned and pristine estate villages, meant as an outward public display of power and status (Figure 11.7). As Irish geographer William Smyth states: 'this is [was] the age of Improvement and Enclosure – of improvements in manners, speech and house-building, improvements in agricultural husbandry and the building of estate villages, and, above all, improvements in the landlords' rental incomes.' (ibid). Within this ideology of 'improvement and enclosure' (ibid), whether looking in the direction of Big Houses, estate villages or the wider surrounding landscape, trees stood central and took on different symbolically charged roles. Beyond their economic implications, the trees planted around Big Houses must have been a powerful reminder of the power and wealth concentrated by the new Protestant landowning elite, not only through their sheer presence in an otherwise largely treeless landscape but also through the sense of division, privacy and impenetrability they conveyed. Taking a U-turn away from their forefathers' deforestation policies, the descendants of the Protestant Ascendancy instigated a large number of reforestation programs which in County Limerick were largely concentrated in the second half of the 18th century and first decades of the 19th century.

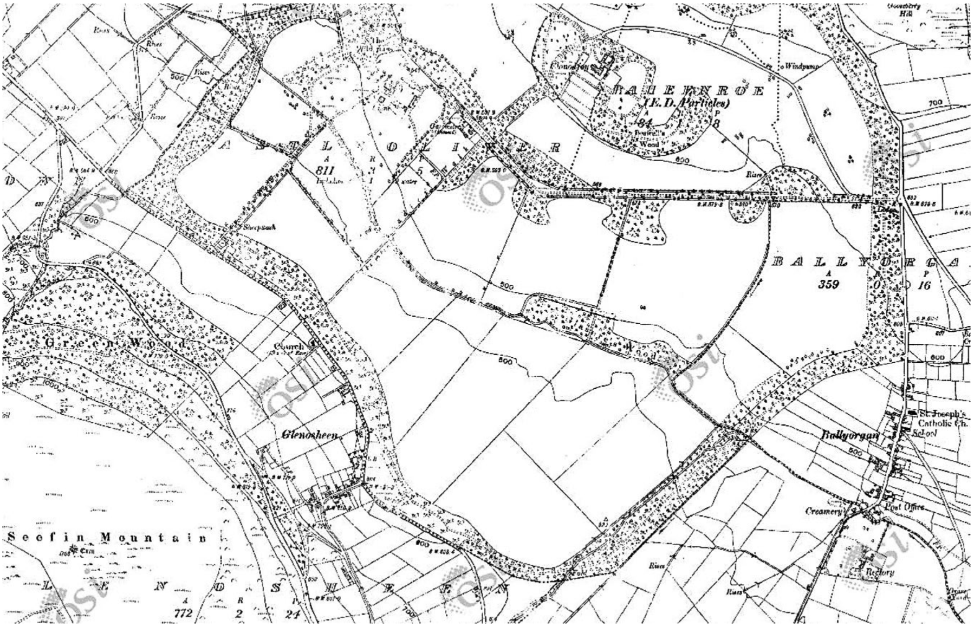
Glenosheen
Ballyorgan
Green Wood
Seefin Mountain
St. Joseph's Catholic Ch. School
Creamery
Post Office
Rectory

Fig 11.5 Map of Glenosheen Townland. Ordnance Survey Ireland. Last Edition. © Tailte Éireann, Copyright Permit No. MP 002324.

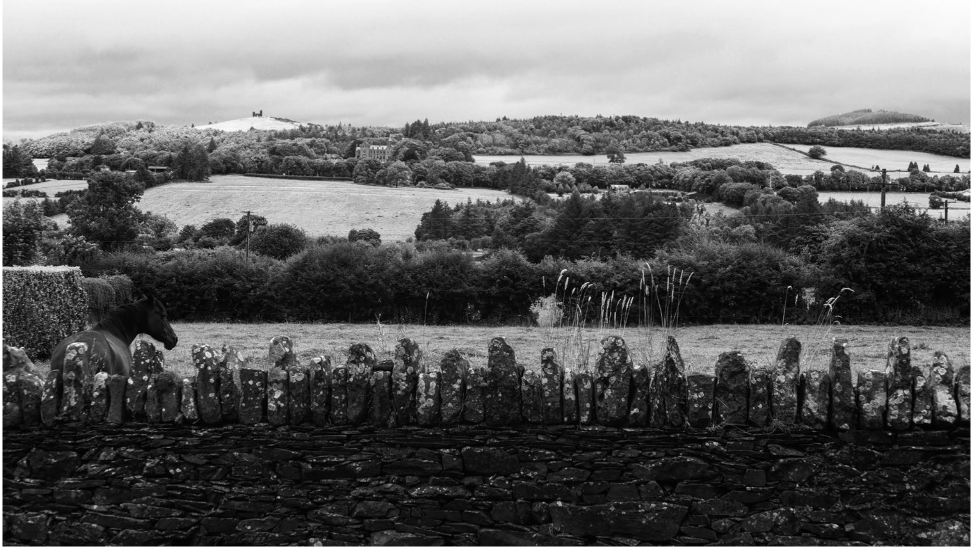

Fig 11.6 View on Castle Oliver demesne, house (built circa 1845) & folly from Glenosheen. Photograph: Julia van Duijvenvoorde.

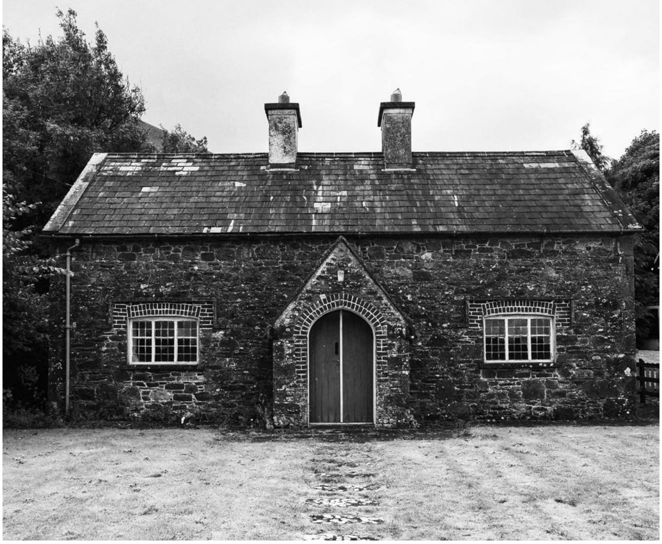

Fig 11.7
(Bottom) Worker's cottage in Glenosheen (built circa 1840). Photograph: Julia van Duijvenvoorde.

a. Planting the village

After having 'tamed the wilderness', the Palatines were in time also expected to turn the previously cleared landscape into a productive and improved agricultural Eden. And that they did. Though similar developments took place across all Palatine settlements, the 'improvements' to the land brought about by the Palatines are particularly visible on maps of Ballingrane, it being one of the earliest and most economically successful Palatine settlements. Looking at the OSI first edition map of the village (Figure 11.3), two features immediately stand out: first, almost every farmstead in the townland has an orchard adjacent to the living quarters and second, tree lanes are very numerous along both roads and field boundaries. In fact, widening the scope of analysis to include other neighbouring townlands, it becomes clear that Ballingrane stands rather alone in its propensity of tree lanes and orchards if taking Big Houses and their demesnes out of the equation. This visual representation of Palatine settlements as distinctively lush offered by the Ordnance Survey in Ireland unsurprisingly coincides greatly with the narrative of the Palatines coming in as 'industrious Protestant strangers' to 'improve the land' pushed by the Tories in England at the time (Defoe 1709). British surveyors could have also had a vested interest in promoting an unfavourable representation of Irish Catholic settlements, furthering their marginalisation. Furthermore, even in the event that the topographic representation of Irish Catholic and Protestant Palatine settlements is accurate, such maps hide any indication of the socio-political context and power imbalances in which the plantation landscape was created, naturalising differences between Palatine and Irish Catholic settlements instead.

In fact, power imbalances between Palatine and Irish Catholic communities were manyfold, starting with disparities in access to land. Because of the Penal Laws instated at the start of the Protestant Ascendancy, many Irish Catholics did not have access to any land, let alone preferential leases: according to the 1841 census, Ireland counted 596,000 cottiers[9], 408,000 smallholders[10] and 453,000 farmers[11] (Bloy 2016). In other words, around a third of the Irish rural population would have been unable to plant trees of any type for their own use due to their total lack of land. Moreover, the planting of trees represented quite a long-term investment, so tenant farmers with short precarious leases were perhaps not have been unlikely to partake in these schemes. Uncoincidentally, Palatines benefitted from longer three-life leases when many of their Irish Catholic neighbours did not (O'Connor 1989: 35). Though their use was heavily regulated by the landowning class, gaining access to trees and their by-products in a nearby vicinity contributed to the Palatines becoming more self-sufficient. While the Palatines did profit from preferential renting conditions, a difference in landscape mentality might have also been at play here – a difference that emerged from varying experiences in the landscape over the generations. Indeed, the profit-driven and exploitative mindset with which Anglo-Protestant landlords had been managing their estates since the start of the Protestant Ascendancy had left the average Irish Catholic villager with no more resources than was strictly necessary for their survival (and later, not even that), with most of the grain, livestock and other food stuffs they produced being confiscated or sold for export. As a result, the Irish Catholic population turned to a food "of which no superior would rob them because it was coveted by none": the potato (Connell, 1951: 389). Nutritious, well suited to damp climates, space efficient and needing little labour, the potato provided the Irish population with the assurance of subsistence even in the face of political turmoil and economic exploitation (Connell 1951; Salaman, 1989). By the arrival of the Palatines in Ireland in 1709, the cultivation of the potato had dominated the foodscape of the Irish peasantry and rendered centuries of embodied knowledge obsolete and dormant The Palatine kitchen gardens and orchards, on the other hand, stood in continuity with the fertile and varied cultivated lands of their former German Heimat if any of the contemporary accounts of the Palatinate hold true: 'This country is much the pleasantest part of the German Empire, and has therefore been coveted by neighbouring princes in all ages. Their hills are cover'd with vines, which yield the well-known Rhinish wine; their plains and vallies abound with all sorts of corn and fruits, and their forests are well stock'd with deer and other game. […] [the Rhine and with the Neckar, Nabe and other rivers] supplies them with plenty of fish, and their mountains abound with minerals, among which agate and jasper and gold found in the sands of the Rhine […]' (Defoe 1709: 21). Lastly, the Palatines' motive to leave their homeland in the Southwest of Germany might yet be another reason explaining why they held on to so many of their pre-migration agricultural practices for so long. Being economic migrants pushed by systemic poverty and drawn by the dream of land ownership, Palatine migrants prioritised organising themselves in largely self-sufficient and efficient agricultural communities[12], something that became and remains a common and widely accepted marker of Palatine identity across the whole diaspora to this day.

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[9] Landless labourers often living in mud huts.

[10] Farmers with no lease security but some land of varying size.

[11] Farmers with long-term multiple life leases, often acting as social leaders in the absence of the landlord and renting part of their land to subtenants.

b. Planting the estate

Already embodied by the lush Palatine kitchen gardens, the ideology of 'improvement and enclosure' was gradually extended to the rest of the Castle Oliver lands by the beginning of the 19th century, starting with the hedgerow planting scheme championed by Daniel Barrington, agent of absentee landlord Richard Oliver Gascoigne from 1825 to 1842. In an attempt to reaffirm estate boundaries, approximately 200 tenants were each given saplings along with precise instructions resulting in the planting of more than 20,000 trees in 1831 (Hennessey 2018: 64). The agent also assigned the Palatines with the task of planting Green Wood by Glenosheen and Ballyriggin Wood by Ballyriggin (Figure 11.10), another close-by townland settled by the Palatines in the 1760s. Unlike the wooded boundaries, these plantations on sloped ground were to serve a primarily aesthetic function as enhancers of the wider landscape. To ensure their proper maintenance as leisurely spaces, caretakers were appointed and paid an extra salary of 10 shillings (Hennessey 2018: 65). Although initially part of another top-down policy from the Anglo-Protestant elite, the inscription of the placename 'Palatine Hill' besides that of 'Ballyriggin Wood' on OSI maps is perhaps an indication that the Palatine community developed a deep sense of attachment and ownership towards the planted woodlands. However, a more critical postcolonial perspective would argue that, beyond its value as an indicator of attachment, the presence of the placename is above all a reminder of the privileged position that the Palatines held within the social hierarchy constructed by the British elite.

With the passing of the Oliver estate on to Richard Oliver Gascoigne's daughters Elizabeth and Mary in 1837. A new and more drastic take on the ideology of 'improvement and enclosure' was applied – much of which is visible on the OSI second and last edition maps of Glenosheen (Figure 11.5). Though these maps succeeded the reforestation programs by several decades, they are still valuable primary sources for the spatial analysis of late 18th century and early 19th century estate-led reforestation as they were made long before the next large-scale reforestation programs which were organised by the newly founded Irish Free State in the early 20th century. One of the most visible ways in which the new ideology of 'improvement and enclosure' expressed itself beyond the boundaries of the Big House is by the presence of strategically placed wooded strips. Palatine settlements, just like their Irish Catholic neighbours, were subjugated to a new landscape where the power of the Anglo-Protestant elite made its presence felt no longer through direct surveillance but through an ever-present rational order which carefully orchestrated day-to-day life.

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[12] The growing of potatoes in horse-ploughed furrows rather than the traditional lazy beds and the implementing of diverse and mixed farming (involving a crop rotation with wheat and barley rather than fallow or pasture land) are examples that often come back in eye-witness accounts of Palatine communities (Blume 1952, Wollaston Hutton 1892).

Very different to the multi-functional and fluid forests of the 17th century Palatinate, the newly planted trees first and foremost served to compartmentalise the landscape and order plots by ownership or function following the reigning Baroque planning ideals of the 19th century. Indeed, on the map of Glenosheen, wooded strips can be spotted between the productive fields directly surrounding the village and the rocky outcropping / pastureland at the bottom of Seefin Mountain. Other wooded strips visible on the map mark the boundary between different tenants' plots of land as well as between the Big House and estate farms & villages. Secondly, the wooded strips restricted movement in the landscape and regulated access to the grounds surrounding the manor house: any tenant wishing to enter the demesne had two choices: they could either go through one of the gates (Figure 11.8) situated East and West of the Castle or go through the estate farm. Thirdly, the new green lines dashing through the landscape not only naturalised power dynamics by compartmentalising space

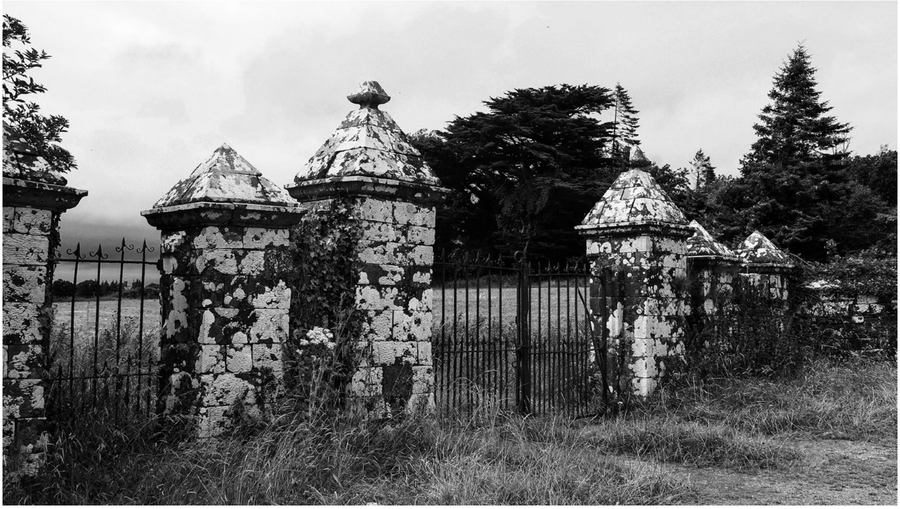

Fig 11.8 Gatehouse to the Castle Oliver demesne in Ballyorgan. Photograph: Julia van Duijvenvoorde.

and channelling movement but also by keeping certain areas purposefully closed or open, transforming the estate into a theatre stage where the play's main actors shone while supporting acts were rendered invisible. Apparent on the last edition of the OSI, the Ladies' Walk is a perfect exemplification of the elite's desire to capitalise on the landscape's concealing/showcasing potential (Figure 11.5). Created for the Gascoigne sisters to walk down to Glenosheen when inspecting the local soup kitchen and constabulary barracks, it is the only path across the estate to be open – guaranteeing both to be seen and to see on the traverse from sacred to common ground. Quite different would have been the villagers' day to day experience going from village to demesne or from one village to another on a path through the dividing wooded strips. While the channelling of villagers into wooded areas rendered them invisible (thus further preserving the idyll of the demesne), it nevertheless provided them with some leisurely enjoyment. As a matter of fact, two centuries later, this very same forest path is still thoroughly enjoyed by tourists and inhabitants alike and memories of Sunday mornings walking along the 'mass path' to church in nearby Ballyorgan are still very much cherished by the local community (Figure 11.11).

Landscape, Resettlement & Empowerment

Similar to the situation they tried to escape from in feudal southwest Germany, the Palatines fell into the hands of an equally authoritarian and asymmetrical system of land-management upon their relocation to Ireland. The deforestation and reforestation programs of the Anglo-Protestant landowning class not only put the Palatines in an environment of constant surveillance, but it also disrupted their previously varied and multi-functional relationship to the forest. For some, the grip and excesses of the English colonial elite became too much to bear and, with the dream of 'plentiful' and never-ending forests in the New World still burned into their mind, a discrete but near-constant stream of Palatines started to trickle from Ireland to North America from the mid-18th century. Despite the growing disillusionment of some, many Palatines remained in County Limerick, in time inscribing themselves in the Irish rural landscape by adapting pre-migration practices such as the caring for kitchen gardens as well

Fig 11.9 (Top left) Pear tree in the garden of a present-day farmstead in Ballingrane which has been continuously inhabited by a Palatine family since 1710.
Fig 11.10 (Bottom) View on the edge of Ballyriggin Wood that has been damaged by fires and storms.
Fig 11.11 (Top right) Wooded path leading from Glenosheen to Ballyorgan across the River Keale. Photographs: Julia van Duijvenvoorde.

as by reappropriating new imposed practices such as the planting and maintaining of leisurely woods. Today, a vibrant Irish Palatine community continues to flourish in the varied landscape of County Limerick. Fruit trees are still pruned, making for full-bodied cider during community gatherings (Figure 11.9). The woods on Palatine Hill still stand thanks to the local inhabitants' propagating and replanting efforts (Figure 11.10). The contemporary layering, adapting and (dis)continuing of historical tree-related practices is a testimony to the post-migration collective identity that the Palatines constructed as ambiguous actors in the British colonisation of Ireland and are now still constructing and reconstructing as the descendants of one of THE very few Early Modern mass migrations to Ireland.

The history of Palatine resettlement in Ireland reminds us that, though the process of post-migration relocation is extremely complex and involves a multitude of human and non-human beings, the decisions that immigration authorities in the country of destination make about where and how exactly migrants are allowed to resettle are highly impactful in terms of economic prosperity, social integration and cultural identity. The work that has been done around the idea of 'landscape justice' is paving the way for more holistic approaches to relocation that consider the impact of top-down decisions on migrant communities beyond the functional level of subsistence and shelter (Egoz 2018; Egoz, De Nardi 2017)[13]. Proponents of the notion argue that, when they are relocated, migrants should benefit from a 'right to landscape' that 'would entitle them to secure a home that is more meaningful and resonates with their cultural references and meanings' (Rixecker 2011: 31). Seeing the current number of war- or climate-induced migrations and the frequent inadequacy of the relocation opportunities given to these migrants by 'charitable' authorities, it seems more than necessary to keep promoting holistic approaches to relocation. From the perspective of the Humanities, one way of contributing to this much needed shift in mentality is to critically look back at historic episodes of relocation and highlight the impact that top-down relocation policies, along with their corresponding political motivations, have had on migrant resettlement in the landscape.

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13 Proponents of 'the right to landscape' argue that the place migrants are resettled in should not only allow them to survive but also to live if the resettlement scheme should benefit both the migrants and the host society. On top of being granted basic access to food and shelter, migrants also have the right to be in a space that, at best, shares some similarities with their original home landscape and therefore is more easily readable and familiar, or at least, a healthy and accessible space that can be freely altered, adapted and reappropriated by the migrant community.

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Biography

Julia van Duijvenvoorde is an interdisciplinary researcher working at the crossroads of Heritage, Memory & Landscape. During her time as a PhD candidate at the University of Heidelberg & the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Julia has been developing a holistic, landscape-driven and multi-temporal approach to home and homemaking in order to frame her comparative analysis of Palatine resettlement in County Limerick, Ireland and New York State, USA. The doctoral research that she conducts represents one of two PhD projects within the jointly funded AHRC-DFG international project about devastation, dislocation and (re-)settlement in the landscape (https://research.ncl.ac.uk/devastation/).

12. Living Amongst the 'Ruins': Dislocation, Resettlement and the Lost Identity of Santa in the Highlands of the Eastern Black Sea, Türkiye

Pelin Abay and Ufuk Serin

Keywords Santa Ruins; Rural Landscape; Dislocation; Re-Settlement; 'Continuing Cultural Landscape'

Abstract The settlement of Santa emerges as an outstanding example of Pontic rural heritage of the Eastern Black Sea region. Following the compulsory Population Exchange between Türkiye and Greece after the Lausanne Treaty in 1923, Santa, like numerous other such settlements, underwent a significant transformation affecting both its physical and socio-cultural fabric. With the rural depopulation in the aftermath of this compulsory exchange, most buildings, once occupied by an Orthodox Greek community (in Turkish *Rum*), were abandoned and gradually ruined. Although the site was resettled by a limited number of Turks, it is mainly used as a highland settlement in summer. From its current physical appearance, the site was named 'Santa Ruins' (Santa Harabeleri) and incongruously designated as a 'third-grade archaeological site' in 1999. Since then, the seasonal inhabitants are literally live amongst the 'ruins'.

Based on archival research conducted in state institutions and field surveys, this contribution explores the processes of rural depopulation and abandonment, transformation and resettlement at Santa after the Population Exchange. How did such events of dislocation and resettlement affect the local identity and 'people-place connection'? How are these landscapes integrated within the cultural memory of the emigrant Rum population, and, equally, how are they perceived and exploited by the new settlers? This paper also argues that the rural settlement, currently referred to as the 'Santa Ruins', needs to be re-identified, considering its past and present attributes, as a 'continuing cultural landscape' (ICOMOS 2017): a settlement where traditional methods of life are merged with modern demands and where evolution continues via the existence of a local community, albeit seasonal.

Pelin Abay and Ufuk Serin: Living Amongst the 'Ruins': Dislocation, Re-Settlement and the Lost Identity of Santa in the Highlands of the Eastern Black Sea, Türkiye. In: Lekakis, S. et al. (eds.), Towards an Archaeology of Devastation: Breaking/Replacing the People-Place Connection in Landscape. Heidelberg: heiBOOKS 2026, p. 261–285, DOI: https://doi.org/10.11588/heibooks.1613.c24611.

Introduction and Methodology

Santa lies in the Eastern Black Sea region within the borders of the municipality of Dumanlı in the province of Gümüşhane (Figure 12.1). Following the Population Exchange between Türkiye and Greece, stipulated by the Lausanne Treaty of 1923,[1] Santa, like numerous other rural settlements in Türkiye, underwent a profound transformation that impacted on both its physical and socio-cultural fabrics. The compulsory dislocation of peoples, in the case of Santa an Orthodox Greek community, referred to as Rum in Turkish,[2] caused rural depopulation, and most structures at Santa were forsaken and gradually succumbed to dilapidation. While the site was resettled by a small number contingent of Turkish residents, its primary function evolved into that of a seasonal highland settlement (in Turkish *yayla*), predominantly active during the summer. Consequently, from its prevailing state of desolation, the site acquired the appellation 'Santa Ruins' *(Santa Harabeleri)* and was designated a 'third-grade archaeological site' in 1999 (Figure 12.2). The exact date when and how Santa was officially renamed as 'Santa Ruins' remains uncertain. However, this designation likely emerged at or just after the time classification of the area as a third-grade archaeological site in 1999.[3] Subsequently, the seasonal inhabitants have found themselves inhabiting this rural landscape replete with the remnants of a historical settlement: a peculiar existence eking out a contemporary life amidst ruins left by previous inhabitants.

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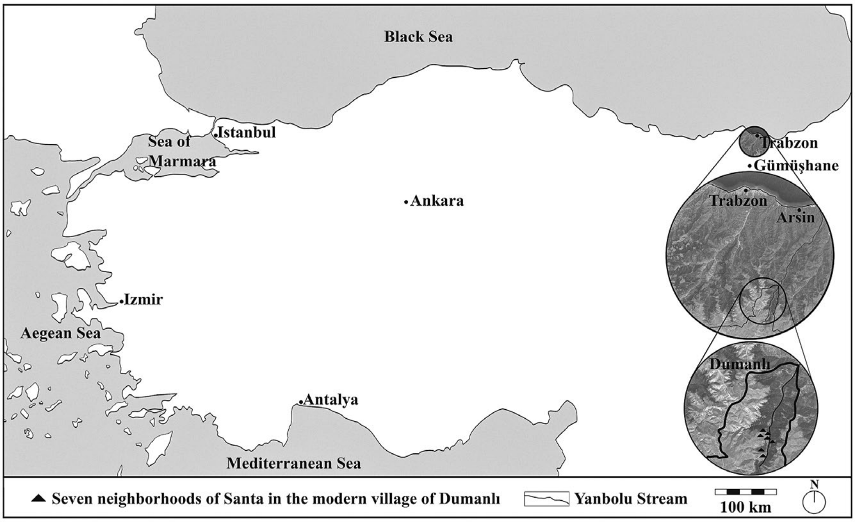
[1] The 1923 compulsory Population Exchange between Türkiye and Greece in 1923 has generated an extensive body of literature, which cannot be covered here. To name just a few: Akgönül 2007; Psomiades 1962; and Yıldırım 2006.

[2] The term Rum primarily denotes Greek-speaking Orthodox Christians residing within the Ottoman Empire (and in modern Türkiye). Nevertheless, the elucidation of Rum identity is a complicated subject that has garnered considerable attention among scholars. Etymologically, the term 'Rum', employed by denizens of the Eastern Roman Empire to delineate themselves, as well as by Persians and Turks who maintained close interactions with the Byzantines, originates from the word 'Roman'. This nomenclature was employed to connote adherence to Christianity rather than signifying a linguistic or ethnic classification. Furthermore, during the era spanning the 13th to the 17th centuries within the Ottoman Empire, the designation of Rum was extended to describe the geographical region of Anatolia devoid of any explicit ethnic connotation. An illustrative instance of this usage is observed in the Ottoman Sultans who adopted the title Kayser-i Rum after Mehmed II. Notably, beyond Anatolia, the Balkan Peninsula was also denoted as Rumeli – literally translating to 'the Land of Rum': see Akgönül 2007: 29; Ergül 2012: 630; Özbaran 2004. For a synthesis, see also Çolak 2019: 1-2.

[3] A 1978 decision (no. 1405) by the High Council of Immovable Antiquities and Monuments shows that it was still referred to as 'Santa Highland' at that time.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Izmir
Aegean Sea
Antalya
Mediterranean Sea
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▲ Seven neighborhoods of Santa in the modern village of Dumanlı
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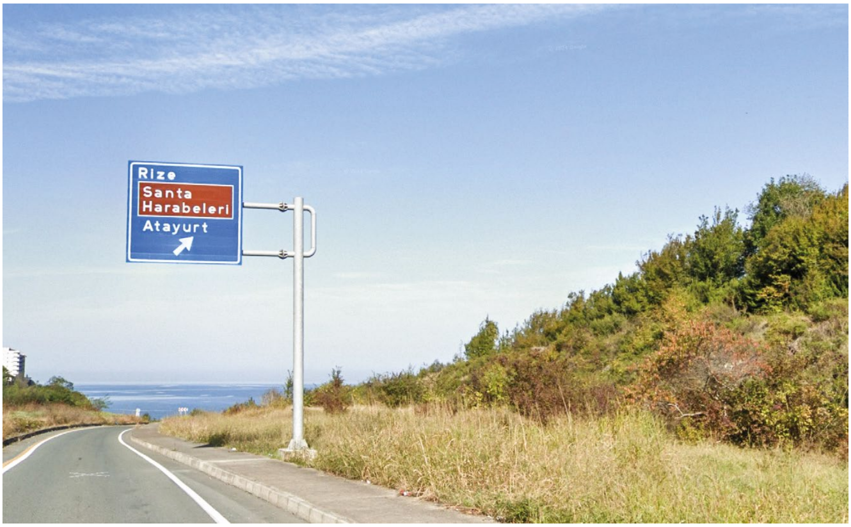
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Fig 12.1 (Top) Schematic map of modern Türkiye, showing the location of Dumanlı village and the seven neighbourhoods of Santa: Piştoflu (Pistofandon), Çakallı (Ciacalandon), Işhanlı (Sihanandon), Binatlı (Pinetendon), Terzili (Terjendon), Cinganlı (Cejlarandon) and Zurnacılı (Zurnaciandon) (produced by the authors, 2024).

Fig 12.2 (Bottom) The 'brown signboard' distinguishing archaeological sites and ancient cities from urban and rural settlements in Türkiye (Abay 2019).

This contribution explores the processes of rural depopulation and abandonment, transformation and resettlement at Santa in the aftermath of the compulsory Population Exchange of 1923. How did such processes of dislocation and resettlement affect the local identity and 'people-place connection'? How are these landscapes integrated within the cultural memory of the emigrant Greek *(*Rum*)* population, and, equally, how are they perceived and exploited by the new settlers? Relying on archival research conducted in state institutions[4] and field surveys carried out in 2019, including semi-structured interviews with anonymous inhabitants and visitors, this contribution re-identifies the rural settlement at Santa – now inaccurately referred to as the 'Santa Ruins' – to promote a more sustainable conservation approach for this essentially residential area.

The field surveys took place in April and August 2019. During the first site visit, the area was completely uninhabited, limiting the scope to a physical survey only. On the second visit, semi-structured interviews[5] were conducted with five local seasonal inhabitants and six domestic visitors to gather information about the site's history and social dynamics.[6] In compliance with the National Human Subjects Ethics Committee's regulations on the use of oral data, interviewees' names cannot be disclosed without their written consent and Committee approval. In this case, only verbal consent was obtained from the interviewees, and, consequently, their names are anonymized here.

Santa as a 'rural landscape'

Santa comprises seven neighbourhoods – Piştoflu (Pistofandon), Çakallı (Ciacalandon), İşhanlı (Sihanandon), Binatlı (Pinetendon), Terzili (Terjendon), Cinganlı (Cejlarandon) and Zurnacılı (Zurnaciandon) – scattered throughout the Yanbolu valley. Smaller settlement units exist to the north of the village of Dumanlı. The area currently known as the 'Santa Ruins' *(Santa Harabeleri)* covers only these seven neighbourhoods.

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[4] Archival research was conducted in the archives of the Trabzon Regional Council for the Conservation of Cultural Properties (Trabzon Kültür Varlıklarını Koruma Bölge Kurulu [TKTVKK]) and the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change. The unpublished 'Yanbolu–Santa Basin Sustainable Tourism Master Plan' (Yanbolu-Santa Havzası Sürdürülebilir Turizm Master Planı), including information about the historical characteristics of Santa, was provided by the staff of Eastern Black Sea Development Agency (Doğu Karadeniz Kalkınma Ajansı [DOKA]).

[5] Semi-structured interview is a qualitative research method that aims to gather insights from participants, offering researchers flexibility in their questioning compared to structured interviews. Further elaboration on the characteristics and utility of semi-structured interviews can be found in the academic literature. See for example, Ruslin et al. 2022.

[6] See the list of interviewees at the end of the paper.

Although lying within the boundaries of Gümüşhane, Santa is easier to reach from the Arsin district east of Trebizond (hereafter Trabzon) by following the route along the Yanbolu stream which flows into the Black Sea.

A brief overview of the geographical characteristics of Santa will help describe this place as a rural landscape. The seven neighbourhoods were established on the slopes of the deep and narrow Yanbolu valley, which is formed by two mountain ranges, Ziyaret (alt. 2650 m) to the east and Karakaban (alt. 2550 m) to the west (Bryer et al. 2002: 108). On the upper elevations of Santa, there stand the Zincirli Ridge (alt. 2142 m), the Kilise Ridge (alt. 2213 m) and the Uzun Ridge (alt. 2186 m) (Gündüzalp 1990: 468). The site, surrounded by these mountain ranges and ridges, holds an isolated geographical position. Access to the neighbourhoods, located at an altitude ranging from ca. 1400 m to 1800 m, can be very difficult due to harsh weather conditions and challenging topography, especially in the winter. Due to its topographical position, only the Cinganlı neighbourhood is visible while approaching Santa from the Yanbolu valley. The access to all neighbourhoods is through dirt roads; pathways provide approach to the majority of the structures, as well as to agricultural and pasture areas. The irregularity of the streets, building lots and equally uneven layout of the houses contribute to the organic character of Santa. With its (seasonally settled) districts, vernacular architecture, pastures and agricultural areas, forestland surrounding the village, and the Yanbolu stream, Santa constitutes a rural landscape (Figure 12.3).

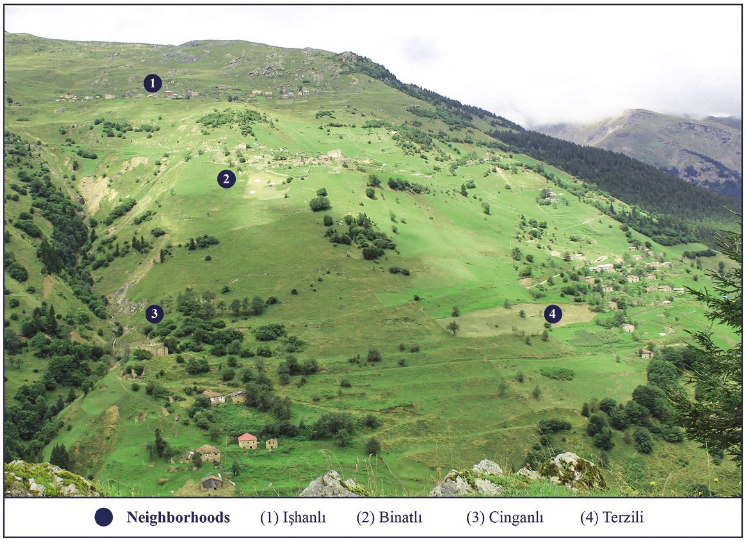

Fig 12.3 Santa, rural landscape, general view as seen from the Zurnacılı neighbourhood to Işhanlı, Binatlı, Cinganlı and Terzili neighbourhoods (Abay 2019).

Rural landscapes are among the most common types of cultural landscapes according to the 2017 IFLA Principles Concerning Rural Landscapes as Heritage (ICOMOS 2017: 1). Cultural landscapes display an amalgamation of the natural environment, local communities, and the physical surroundings. While the term 'landscape' indicates a relationship between human and natural components, the term 'cultural landscape' highlights human contribution (Taylor and Lennon 2011: 2).[7] The concept of landscape, as a cultural construct, provides a framework for understanding how people adapt to and shape their surroundings: the term 'cultural' is used to accentuate the influence of human factors in this process. The continuing human interventions in cultural landscapes help to keep these places evolving. As a sub-category of 'organically evolved landscape', as defined in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2008), a 'continuing landscape' is 'one which retains an active social role in contemporary society closely associated with the traditional way of life, and in which the evolutionary process is still in progress. At the same time, it exhibits significant material evidence of its evolution over time' (UNESCO 2008: 86). Given that rural landscapes are dynamic environments created by customs and the accumulation of knowledge, they are aptly categorized as continuing landscapes. The IFLA Principles Concerning Rural Landscapes as Heritage emphasise that even degraded or abandoned rural areas can still be considered rural landscapes (and thus continuing landscapes) from their potential to be reused or reclaimed (ICOMOS 2017: 2). The essence of a rural settlement's identity is delineated by the intrinsic values ascribed by local communities, alongside factors such as the historical origins of the site, economic pursuits, and geographical positioning. However, the presence and contribution of a local community is generally neglected while defining and identifying rural settlements (Yeşilbağ 2019: 25). It should be noted that an existing local community helps preserve the rural identity of the site, unlike rural areas that are abandoned for different reasons (even though they have the potential for reuse), as described in the 2017 IFLA Principles.

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[7] For more on cultural and rural landscapes, see O'Hare 1997; Rossler 2006; Taylor et al. 2011; Whitehand 1981.

Settlement history and socio-cultural structure of Santa: a brief overview

Santa appears for the first time in the cadastral record book of Trabzon *(Trabzon Tahrir Defteri)* dated 1554 as a hamlet *(mezra)* within the borders of the sub-district *(nahiye)* of Yomra.[8] Although the cadastral book does not provide information about the establishment of Santa, it demonstrates that the site was there in the 16th century when the records were made. There are however different opinions about earlier foundations. Some attribute the origins of the locals to the Heptacomets, one of the local communities in the Southeast Black Sea Region in the first millennium BCE (Athanasiadis 1967: 20; Erüz et al. 2010: 194).[9] Militiades Nymphopoulos, who was a public-school principal at Santa before the 1923 Population Exchange, maintains that the origins of the site date to 300 CE and that a Greek lifestyle continued there uninterruptedly until 1924 (Nymphopoulos 1953: 14). However, Stathis Athanasiadis, a former Greek inhabitant of Santa, argues that it was founded by Orthodox Greeks fleeing from the coast eight years after the capture of Trabzon in 1461 by the Ottomans (Athananasiadis 1967: 33). Bryer suggests that the Orthodox Greek presence began in the 17th century (Bryer 1976: 177). No physical evidence exists to prove the accuracy of any these theories, and no archaeological or textual evidence indicating the presence of a medieval (or earlier) settlement at Santa or along the entire Yanbolu valley has ever been found (Bryer and Winfield 1985: 321).

Santa held a privileged position throughout the past few centuries due to the excellent metalworking skills and experience of its inhabitants and the services they provided to the Sublime Porte *(Bâb-ı Âli)*. The village gained the status of semi-autonomy with a sultan's edict *(ferman)* in 1725 (Bruneau 1995: 125–6). The naturally isolated position of Santa and its right of being autonomous enabled its Greek inhabitants to preserve their culture, traditions, religion, and language.[10] Each neighbourhood had its own president and council members, dealing with their own administrative matters. There was also an assembly of the chiefs *(geniki dimogerontia)* of each neighbourhood to deal with broader concerns (Athanasiadis 1967: 20). They also received the guardianship of the Monastery of Panagia Soumela and had a say in matters related to it; cultural and religious relations between Santa and the monastery thus strengthened over time

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[8] This information is from the unpublished 'Yanbolu–Santa Basin Sustainable Tourism Master Plan' (Yanbolu-Santa Havzası Sürdürülebilir Turizm Master Planı).

[9] The term Heptacomets, i.e. the inhabitants of the seven villages, recalls Santa, with its seven neighbourhoods.

[10] For more on the socio-cultural characteristics of the Greek inhabitants of Santa, see Abay 2023: 78–81.

(Bruneau 1995: 133). Santa continued to develop, attaining its most prosperous period in the 19th century (Gündüzalp 1990: 469).

The inhabitants of Santa, who were most skilled at stone masonry – especially in the 19th century – took part in construction work not only at Santa but also in the surrounding villages, as well as in Trabzon, Istanbul, and abroad, more particularly in Iran and Russia (Gavra 1997: 200–201). The masons working in Russia either returned seasonally to Santa or stayed abroad permanently. The latter sent some of their earnings to their families (Saylan 2016: 286). Craftsmanship was another professional practice at Santa. The local people worked as blacksmiths, carpenters, and shoemakers. Mining was also an important source of income, although it was followed somewhat less than other professions. The lead and iron quarries near Santa were in operation until the second half of the 19th century. The products from the tile kilns near the Zurnacılı neighbourhood were exported to Trabzon along the Yanbolu valley. Coal was supplied to the mines at Gümüşhane. In contrast, the agricultural resources of Santa were always limited because of the cold climate and infertile land. Agriculture was undertaken only to a degree sufficient to provide for the inhabitants, being practised alongside animal husbandry (Athanasiadis 1967: 16; Gavra 1997: 190–216; Gündüzalp 1990: 470).

The emergence of nationalism in the early 19th century inevitably affected the non-Muslim populations within the Ottoman Empire (Korkusuz and Kutluk 2016: 239). Motivated by nationalist ideas, the people of Santa established a guerrilla presence in the surrounding mountains in 1916 and were involved in an armed conflict with the Turkish army to gain full independence. Greeks from other parts of Pontos also obtained arms from Santa. In 1917, they also received the support of the Russian army. This short-lived assistance ended when the Russians withdrew from Ottoman lands with the Bolshevik Revolution. The Grand National Assembly of Türkiye granted an amnesty for the Greeks at Santa in 1921; however, the locals refused to accept this. Consequently, the Turkish army intervened militarily on September 6, 1921. The village was seriously devastated during the conflict; women and children were sent away to Eastern Anatolia, while the remaining population found refuge in the woodlands (Bruneau 1995: 126–8; Liddle 2013. 27–8; Nymphopoulos 1953: 16; Tutkun 2009: 121).

Emigration to Greece and creation of 'memory bridges'

When the Greek population of Santa, along with their movable belongings were expelled after the 1923 Population Exchange (Çapa 1990: 53), they emigrated and continued their Pontic lifestyle in various parts of Greece – notably Kastania, Mikri Santa, and Nea Santa in Macedonia. They initially settled in different regions of Greece, but those accustomed to life in a mountainous region could not abide most of these places, which have none of the geographical characteristics of Santa, and moved, once again, to mountainous and isolated rural areas (Bruneau 1995: 129; Liddle 2013: 205). This dislocation, i.e. the large-scale forced migration of reciprocal communities, led to a radical transformation in the socio-cultural and physical structure of rural settlements and landscapes in Türkiye that experienced processes of abandonment and resettlement. Such transformations inevitably damaged the memory bond between places and peoples, for both 'core' communities and new settlers.[11] However, by creating 'memory bridges', people can still stay in contact (Van Duijvenvoorde et al. 2023: 5). The emigrating Greeks of Santa did just this, by settling in mountainous regions and naming their new homes in Macedonia after Santa (Mikri Santa and Nea Santa). They also settled in areas such as Vergina and Kastania on Mount Vermio in the Province of Veria.[12]

The village of Kastania itself has been transformed into a 'memory bridge' where a memory link to Pontos has been created and is commemorated. In 1952, an eponymous monastery (Panagia Soumela) was built on Mount Vermio near Kastania, where an annual festival starting on August 15 takes place in commemoration of the Trapezuntine Monastery of Panagia Soumela. Pontic Greeks symbolically reunite and commune with their ancestors during this festival in which the previous inhabitants of Santa and their descendants also participate. They also built the first regional guest house there in 1963, referred to as the Santa House and visible from the Monastery of Panagia Soumela on Mount Vermio, for the use of pilgrims commemorating the forced migration through the Population Exchange (Bruneau 1995: 131–2; Liddle 2013: 42–3).[13] The proximity of this building to the monastery represents the special status the inhabitants of Santa had as the protector of the monastery. The building and its courtyard, where a stone monument stands, symbolically recall Santa. There are six pine trees at one side of the stone monument representing the six neighbourhoods (Piştoflu, Çakallı, İşhanlı, Binatlı, Terzili and Cinganlı) on the west side of the Yanbolu valley, and one pine tree on the other side representing the Zurnacılı neighbourhood on the east side (Liddle 2013: 93–7). The pine trees characterizing the location of the neighbourhoods may rightly be considered 'memory bridges' (Figure 12.4).

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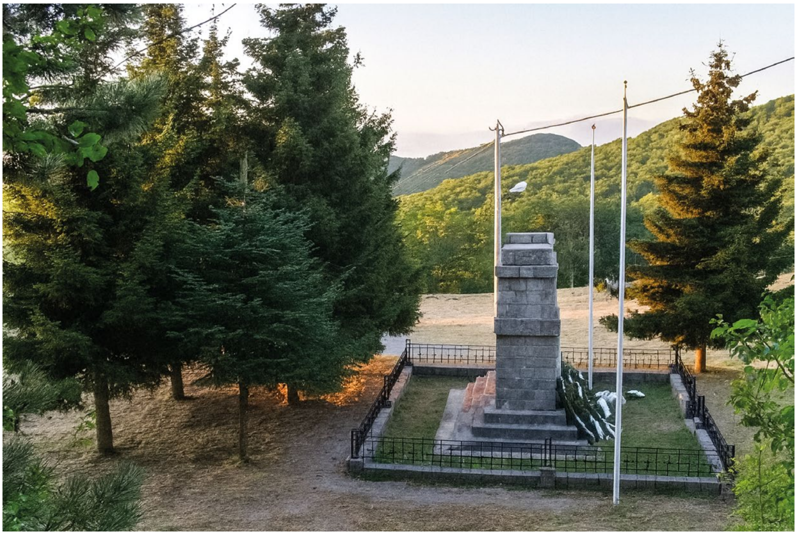
[11] Some of these rural settlements were settled by new Turkish inhabitants, but others remained either completely uninhabited or underpopulated at best. For the term 'core community', see Poulios 2010: 175.

[12] For the settlements accommodating Greek communities from Santa in Greece, see Liddle 2013: 206.

[13] In the 1970s, a larger church was built next to the smaller one. The church of Panagia Soumela does not function as a monastery like the original one in Trabzon. It does even not resemble its Trapezuntine predecessor in terms of its function, architecture and setting. Nonetheless, it is a symbolic representation of the original Monastery of Panagia Soumela.



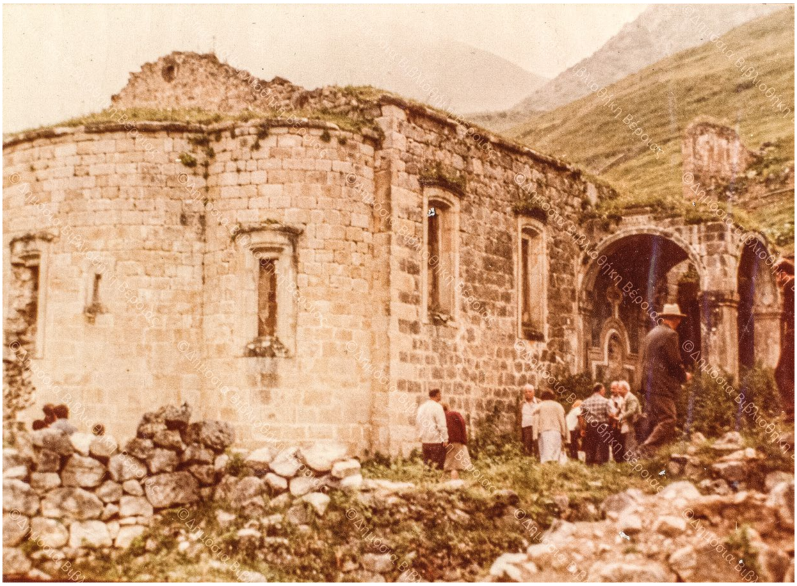


Fig 12.4 (Top) Kastania (Greece), the Monument of Santa, with pine trees representing the neighbourhoods of Santa (Liddle 2013: 97)

Fig 12.5 (Bottom) Santa, Piştoflu neighbourhood, St. Christopher Church visited by the Greek emigrants in 1982 ("St. Christopher")

The previous Greek inhabitants of Santa and their descendants organize annual commemoration ceremonies in their new homes to remember the loss of their families and friends in the events of 1921 and 1923, and so construct a social memory through various activities, such as seminar sessions, church liturgies, memorial rituals and communal meals, held in the House of Santa. These ceremonies are significant for a spiritual engagement with and remembrance of Santa among the emigrant Greek community and so generate a collective memory (Bruenau 1995: 126; Liddle 2013: 91–2). Besides the memorial services held at Kastania, the descendants of the emigrants visit Santa to acquire a deeper understanding of their roots and strengthen ties with the place. Although these commemorative visits are individual and rare, a genuine physical appreciation of Santa is established, and the spiritual attachment to the place is so enhanced (Figure 12.5). Because of this 'commemorative value', the place acquires the potential to become 'a site with memorial aspect' which could/would transform Santa into both a sacred place for mourning and reflection and an educational ground for learning from the memory of past events and social trauma.[14]

Pierre Nora, in his Les Lieux de Mémoire (xvii), describes *a lieu de mémoire* as 'any significant entity, whether material or immaterial in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community'. Nora identifies 'sites of memory' within specific national contexts, but this concept can also be extended beyond the national boundaries. These sites are locations that have become memorials not through deliberate design but through the significance of the events that occurred there and the desire of witnesses or communities to preserve their memory (Beazley and Cameron 2021: 2). Such places often serve dual roles: as sacred or private spaces for mourning and reflection, and as educational spaces where society can learn from the memory of past events and shared trauma (Bickford 2014: 494).

According to the UNESCO Report on the Interpretation of Sites of Memory (2018), if the commemorative value attributed to a site is not the main value but a secondary one, then that place can be termed a 'site with memorial aspect' but not a 'site of memory' (UNESCO 2018: 13). This also applies to Santa. Notably, heritage sites with a memorial aspect need specific care, as the presence of potentially different stakeholder groups associated with the site can create differing and contested values from ethnic, historical, socio-cultural, religious, ideological/political, or economic factors. The Burra Charter also notes that the co-existence of different values of multiple cultures creates a potential for conflict (ICOMOS 2013: 20). Accordingly, the contested values need to be navigated carefully, considering the diverse perspectives of different stakeholder groups and finding ways to balance competing interests while ensuring the conservation of cultural heritage for future generations.[15] The Nara +20 text, adopted in 2014 by the participants of the Meeting on the 20th Anniversary of the Nara Document on Authenticity (2015: 146), also emphasizes the need for an inclusive approach to contested values:

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[14] As Bruneau (1995: 274) notes, several books authored by the Rums of Santa on the history, geography, and intangible cultural values of Santa underscore the lasting significance of this small settlement and greatly contribute to its emergence as a site of memorial importance.

> *'The Nara Document calls for respect of cultural diversity in cases where cultural values appear to be in conflict. In the last 20 years it has become evident that competing values and meanings of heritage may lead to seemingly irreconcilable conflicts. To address such situations, credible and transparent processes are required to mediate heritage disputes. These processes would require that communities in conflict agree to participate in the conservation of the heritage, even when a shared understanding of its significance is unattainable.'*

Santa after the Relocation

While Santa's Greek community was adapting to its new physical and cultural settings in Greece, Santa itself remained uninhabited until 1930.[16] It was to be expected that Santa, along with other rural settlements abandoned by their core Greek communities, would be initially occupied by the Turks returnees from Greece. This applied to the neighbouring rural settlement of the Krom Valley in the province of Gümüşhane occupied by the Turkish population migrating from Thessaloniki (Erüz et al. 2010: 199).[17] However, as Coşkun Erüz notes, instead of Turkish immigrants from Greece, the residents from Arsin, Yomra and Araklı districts of Trabzon began to rent and/or purchase some of the houses and building lots in 1930 from the Turkish Ministry of Treasury and Finance. The region's geographical isolation and harsh winter climate, which once benefited the Greek inhabitants by helping preserve their cultural identity and traditional practices, later became a significant obstacle for the incoming Turkish population. Access to the area proved difficult, and the newly settled Turks, already residing in nearby provinces, showed little interest in establishing permanent homes in Santa. Instead, the region gradually transformed into a site of seasonal occupation.

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[15] For a critical assessment of values-based approaches, see Poulios 2010: 172–73.

[16] The ownership of the empty buildings and lots were transmitted to the state during this period.

[17] However, they found the area unpleasant to live in and migrated to other places throughout the country by selling their houses to locals from the surrounding villages.

The seven neighbourhoods of Santa thus became utilized as highland *(yayla)* pastures and living quarters in summer ("Tarihi ve Turistik Hazine"). These districts are now almost completely empty in winter owing to the severe climatic conditions that inevitably challenge access, inadequate infrastructure (provision of electricity, water and public transportation), and the scarcity of fundamental services such as education and health care.[18] Additionally, the lack of appropriate wet (sanitary) spaces and adequate comfort conditions in traditional dwellings reduces the opportunities for their permanent use/reuse. Some current inhabitants turned outbuildings into sanitation units, but these are far beyond meeting their demands in terms of comfort.

As mentioned above, *yayla* is a Turkish term that describes a highland settlement, seasonally used for activities such as grazing, farming or for any kind of work that provides a livelihood (or simply for resting in) in summertime. The geographical/topographical positioning of *yayla* settlements makes them difficult to inhabit and exploited in winter. The uses of *yayla* may also vary according to different geographical contexts. For instance, in southern Türkiye, *yayla* indicates a place that can be settled temporarily during the hottest months of the summer. These settlements are usually located outside and often quite far away from the main settlement area of the village(s) which they are associated with in socio-economic terms (Emiroğlu 1977: 17; Tunçdilek 1964: 16; Zaman 2000: 283). In legal and administrative terms, according to the Pasture Act no. 4342 of 1998, the right to exploit *yayla* settlements, which fall under the control and provision of the state, is vested in one or more villages or municipalities. Therefore, these areas cannot be privately owned, but only leased by inhabitants of the associated villages or municipalities.[19]

In the Eastern Black Sea context, highland festivals *(yayla şenlikleri)* are also important in highland culture. These festivals serve as major social and cultural gatherings for communities living there, where families, friends, and neighbours from different villages and towns gather to celebrate their shared heritage and traditions. Highland festivals are akin to lively carnivals where individuals of all ages, dressed in their traditional clothes, revel in the festivities. The locals engage in traditional folk dances like the *horon*, while music from local instruments such as *kemençe*, drum, clarinet, and *tulum* are played. People sing arm in arm and hand in hand, until the late hours, honouring the rich traditions, customs, and social norms of the region. These festivals serve as a testament to the unity and solidarity among the people of the area (Canalioğlu 2000: 126; Zaman 2000: 283).

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[18] This information is provided by the representative *(muhtar)* of the Dumanlı village and some local Turkish inhabitants of Santa in 2019.

[19] Mera Kanunu: T.C. Resmi Gazete (Official Gazette), 28.02.1998-23272.

Several villages, such as Hisarcık, Meydan, Çat, Yaylaköy, in the Eastern Black Sea area, are only seasonally settled. These, utilized only in the summer as *yayla* settlements, are used for grazing. The residents leave their seasonal *yayla* dwellings and return to their winter homes once the transhumance period ends (Tunçel et al. 2004: 52). The neighbourhoods of Santa are similarly used as highland pastures and living quarters in summer (Figure 12.6). However, grazing at Santa is practised only to provide for local needs rather than serving as a significant source of income. In contrast to a typical *yayla* settlement displaying the above-mentioned characteristics, the majority of the buildings at Santa are under private ownership. Moreover, no annual festivals take place here. Although the site cannot be defined as a *yayla* in legal/administrative and cultural terms, the current local inhabitants identify Santa as such in close association with its topographical position on a highly elevated area that makes this place difficult to settle permanently. It is also worth noting that Santa is referred to as *yayla* in Decision no. 1405 of 1978, despite the area being privately owned.

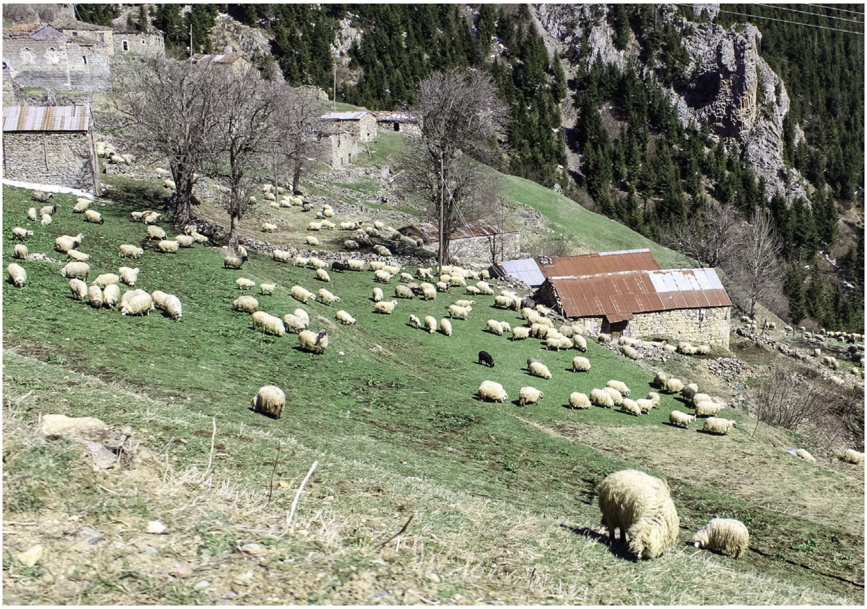

Fig 12.6 Çakallı neighbourhood, pasture areas (Abay 2019)

Inevitably, the neighbourhoods of Santa remained underpopulated and underwent a radical socio-cultural transformation, also reflected in its physical structure. While the Greek population of the village reached 5000 in 1905, as noted by Nymphopoulos (1953: 70), Bryer mentions only 150 Turks living at Santa during his field work in the 1960s (Bryer et al. 2002: 129). The censuses conducted after the Population Exchange covered not only the population of all the neighbourhoods, but also that of the other settlements within the borders of Dumanlı village. Therefore, it is impossible to determine the population density of Santa precisely, but it is known that it has never reached its previous numbers.

Santa today

The principal factor contributing to the socio-cultural and physical transformation of Santa is the major shift from the permanent utilization of the area by the previous Greek community to its seasonal use by the newly arrived population. The Turks have created their own associations, sense of belonging, and memories – different from the dislocated Greek community – according to their own cultural and religious needs, thus significantly altering the local identity of the site, culturally, socially, and economically. For example, social life here is limited to visits between neighbours, picnicking in surrounding green areas or visiting the nearby Taşköprü Highland.[20] The only remaining indoor public space at Santa is the coffeehouse in the Piştoflu neighbourhood. Despite limited social activities and interaction, agriculture, animal husbandry, and pastoral practices all contribute to shaping the area as a rural and cultural landscape. Following the compulsory Population Exchange in 1923, Santa's only economic source has been pastoral activities carried out by villagers from nearby communities. The residents of Santa focus on animal husbandry and small-scale agriculture primarily for their own needs, without generating income from these activities.[21]

Alongside its demographic and socio-cultural changes, Santa, like numerous other rural settlements, has inevitably suffered significantly in its built environment. The physical deterioration began with the armed conflict of 1921 and gained momentum after the Population Exchange. In the past, each neighbourhood had at least one church, bell tower, school, fountain, and several residential units (Figure 12.7). These structures formed a 'nucleated' settlement pattern in each neighbourhood, as they were set close together, unlike the other villages of Pontos, where these buildings are scattered throughout a valley (Bryer and Winfield 1985: 1). Due to the armed conflict of 1921 and subsequent abandonment and neglect, most buildings have deteriorated or collapsed completely. The extant structures, largely in ruins, are now scattered throughout the area; the settlement pattern of individual neighbourhoods thus changed from nucleated to dispersed (Figure 12.3).

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[20] This information is obtained from the seasonal inhabitants interviewed in 2019 (L1 and L2)

[21] Information obtained from L3, L4 and L5.

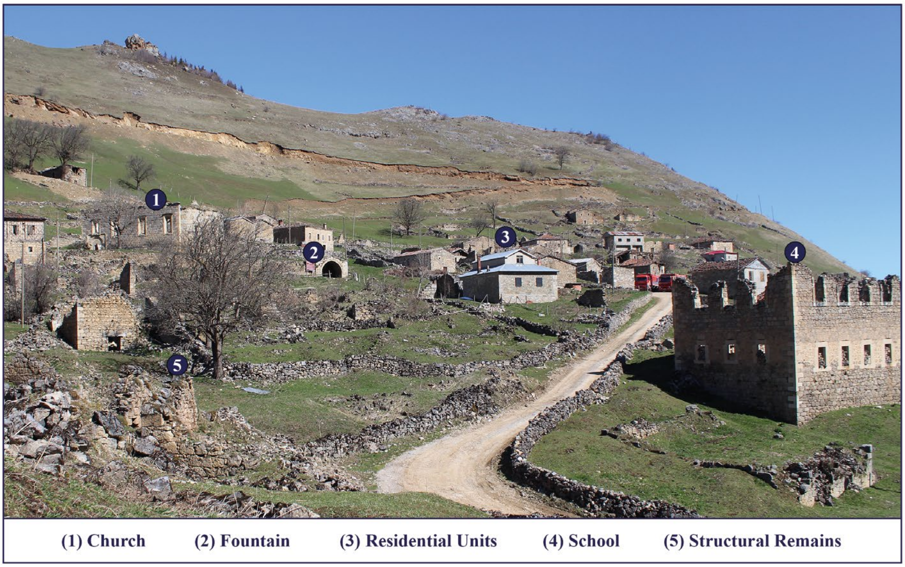

Fig 12.7 Piştoflu neighbourhood, with different building types (Abay 2019)

Notably, most of the surviving residential units currently in use are in a relatively good state of preservation, as a result of regular repairs and maintenance. However, there is a significant stock of unused dwellings in ruinous conditions or in a moderate state of preservation at best.[22] The public buildings, such as churches and Greek schools, damaged during times of conflict and troubles, became completely dysfunctional with the changes in the socio-cultural structure of the settlement and also fell into ruins.[23] From the present (ruinous) appearance of the physical environment, the seven neighbourhoods were termed the 'Santa Ruins' *(Santa Harabeleri)*, and designated as a 'third-grade archaeological site' in 1999 (Figure 12.2). Since then, the seasonal inhabitants are literally living amongst the 'ruins'.

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[22] For a classification of conservation status of the residential units at Santa, see Abay 2023: 145.

[23] Information obtained from L5.

Conservation status of Santa

The earliest action for the preservation of the site dates to 1978 when the seven neighbourhoods were designated a 'conservation area to be protected' *(korunması gerekli sit alanı)*. At the same time, the 19th century churches at Santa and the Monastery of Panagia Soumela (Sümela Manastırı) in Trabzon were categorized as 'ancient monuments' by the Decision (no. 1405) of the High Council of Immovable Antiquities and Monuments on 17 November 1978.[24] The same regulation also mandated the reopening of the earlier and disused road between Santa and the Monastery of Panagia Soumela for the purpose of tourism. Following this, the seven neighbourhoods and their surroundings were registered as both a 'third-grade archaeological site' *(üçüncü derece arkeolojik sit alanı)* and a 'first- and third-grade natural site' *(birinci ve üçüncü derece doğal sit alanı)* on 29 January 1999 by the Decision (no. 3379) of Trabzon Council for the Conservation of Cultural and Natural Properties. In 2020, the natural site of Santa was further divided into three different conservation categories: 'sustainable conservation and controlled use area' *(sürdürülebilir koruma ve kontrollü kullanım alanı)* and 'qualified natural conservation area' *(nitelikli doğal koruma alanı)* with the Decision (no. 138455) of the Turkish Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change,[25] and, finally, a 'sensitive area to be protected' *(kesin korunacak hassas alan)* with a Presidential Decree (no. 3021).[26]

A definition of 'archaeological site' was first introduced in Türkiye by the Law no. 1710 on Antiquities in 1973.[27] Archaeological sites are thereby defined as areas containing underwater, exposed or buried remains of ancient civilisations and all types of cultural assets reflecting the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of their historical periods. The Law no. 2863 of 1983 on the Conservation of Cultural and Natural Properties brought a broader understanding of cultural heritage conservation, including definitions related to movable and immovable cultural properties, regulations concerning archaeological excavations and coordination amongst various authorities responsible for conservation.[28] With this law, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism was given authority for the conservation of archaeological and cultural heritage. In accordance with the regulations, the High Council for the Conservation of Cultural and Natural Properties promulgated the Enactment no. 658 on Archaeological Sites

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[24] Gayrimenkul Eski Eserler ve Anıtlar Yüksek Kurulu (GEEAYK).

[25] Bakanlık Oluru (Ministry Approval), 03.08.2020-138455.

[26] T.C. Resmi Gazete (Official Gazette), 26.09.2020-31256.

[27] 1710 Sayılı Eski Eserler Yasası: T.C. Resmi Gazete (Official Gazette), 06.05.1973-14527.

[28] 2863 Sayılı Kültür ve Tabiat Varlıklarını Koruma Kanunu: T.C. Resmi Gazete (Official Gazette), 23.07.1983-18113.

– Protection and Use Principles in 1999.[29] Accordingly, all archaeological sites, excluding urban archaeological heritage, are to be classified as first, second or third-grade sites ("Arkeolojik Sitler, Koruma ve Kullanma Koşulları"). This enactment provided some regulations concerning the types and extent of conservation treatments and construction in areas designated as such.[30] In 2012, assessment criteria for the identification and registration of archaeological sites were specified in greater detail with the Regulation on the Identification and Registration of Immovable Cultural Properties and Protected Sites.[31] This regulation defines the 'third-grade archaeological sites' as areas where cultural assets are likely to exist on the basis of 'rare' finds and/or scientific research and observations, environmental assessment, or because of their close interaction with the first and second grade archaeological sites ("Arkeolojik Sitler, Koruma ve Kullanma Koşulları"). The registration and identification of Santa as a 'third-grade archaeological site' have significantly affected the status of conservation and use of this rural settlement area today.

Conclusion

The dislocation of the core Greek community and devastation of the rural landscape of Santa caused a significant loss of cultural heritage assets, eradicating both its tangible and intangible attributes and the spirit of the place. It is expected that dislocated communities may feel a sense of rootlessness, leading to feelings of alienation, when the connection between landscape and people is broken. However, the emigrant Greek community of Santa and their descendants somehow managed to maintain and keep alive their Pontic identity. They resisted assimilation in the face of challenges to their identity and conserved existing cultural norms despite new experiences and geo-cultural contexts in Greece, by creating memory bridges. Memories of dislocation and settlement in a new place may become a part of the collective identity, influencing how a community understands their past and present. On the Turkish side, however, the sense of continuity was interrupted, as Santa remained uninhabited between 1923 and 1930, and a cultural landscape evolved within the structures and vestiges of the old one. Despite the arrival of new settlers in 1930, the nature of Santa has radically changed from a set of several permanent settlements to a seasonal *(yayla)* type of landscape use, without the memories or experiences of the former inhabitants amongst whose ruins the current inhabitants live.

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[29] 658 nolu İlke Kararı – Arkeolojik Sitler, Koruma ve Kullanma Koşulları.

[30] Temporary building regulations remain in force in 'third-grade archaeological sites' (such as Santa), until a conservation master plan is prepared. This also applies to Santa for which no conservation master plan has been prepared so far.

[31] Korunması Gerekli Taşınmaz Kültür Varlıklarının ve Sitlerin Tespit ve Tescili Hakkında Yönetmelik: T.C. Resmi Gazete (Official Gazette), 13.03.2012-28232.

In the process, the site has also acquired new meanings and attributes, such as memory value, as well as new stakeholder groups. The picturesque remains and their geographical and natural setting, with significant visual appeal, also elicit emotional reactions in visitors and tourists. In this sense, it could be argued that the site gained aesthetic value and tourism potential with its name changing to Santa Ruins. On the one hand, the romantic associations evoked by picturesque ruins may attract visitors. On the other hand, the designation of the area as an archaeological site complicates the implementation of conservation measures that would be suitable for a rural residential area, even if only seasonal.

Although there are limited attempts to revive the area and foster sustainable conservation through recovery, resilience-building, and community development ("Arkeolojik Sit Alanı"), the restrictions imposed by the 'third-grade archaeological site' classification hinders a more permanent occupation of Santa. This designation also induces ambiguity and thus impedes a proper bonding to Santa by the locals. It is also important to note that the Regulation of 2012 was not yet in force when the neighbourhoods were registered as a 'third-grade archaeological site'.[32] As Zeynep Eres (2016: 9) observes, villages featuring ruined traditional buildings often evolve into 'archaeological ruins' in time. Accordingly, the existence of derelict traditional structures becomes the primary factor influencing the classification of the area as such.

Santa, despite its architectural vestiges (particularly public structures), is still seasonally utilized by a community. The traditional houses in use have been adapted to meet the needs of current inhabitants, and new buildings are also being constructed. However, these new structures detract from the area's traditional character. Considering Santa holistically – its traditional buildings, gardens, courtyards, and streets, along with the interactions between human and environmental elements – it aligns more closely with an urban conservation area *(kentsel sit alanı)* according to the current national legal regulations, rather than an archaeological site.[33]

The rural landscape of nearby Krom Valley within the same province of Gümüşhane shares similar architectural, natural, settlement, and demographic characteristics with Santa and has also been designated as a third-grade archaeological site. However, unlike Santa, which lacks archaeological or documentary evidence from the ancient or medieval periods, Krom Valley is home to archaeological remains, including ancient coins and Krom Castle, which dates to the Roman period (Bryer and Winfield 1985: 321; Erüz et al. 2010: 46; Türkfiliz 2023: 4). In comparison, the villages of Sazak in Central Anatolia and Kayaköy on the Aegean coast of Türkiye might actually resemble archaeological ruins, as they have lost their socio-cultural context, and their buildings are entirely in ruins. Yet, unlike Santa, these villages were designated as 'urban conservation areas'.[34] These inconsistencies highlight the ambiguity in the criteria for designating historic rural landscapes under the current legal regulations. Therefore, it is crucial to introduce the concept of 'rural conservation area' *(kırsal sit alanı)* into national legislation and to establish clear guidelines for defining these areas. Such a designation would facilitate a deeper appreciation of Santa's rural identity.

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[32] See above n. 29.

[33] According to Enactment No. 720 on Urban Conservation Areas – Principles for Protection and Use, 'urban conservation areas' are zones where natural and cultural environmental elements, such as walls, buildings, gardens, vegetation, and settlement patterns, exist together. These elements collectively possess architectural, local, historical, aesthetic, and artistic qualities, which enhance their value beyond what they would have individually: T.C. Resmi Gazete (Official Gazette), 10.12.1987-19660.

Therefore, to strengthen the rural identity of the site, one important step would be to replace the term 'ruins' with 'continuing cultural landscape' or 'rural landscape', in accordance with the doctrinal framework established by ICOMOS and IFLA following the Milano Declaration on Rural Landscapes in 2017. The presence of a local community and the continuity of rural life, even if seasonal, play a crucial role in allowing the site to 'evolve organically'. In contrast, the term 'ruins' in Turkish context typically evokes images of deserted areas with ruinous structures or ancient cities, a perception reinforced by interviews with visitors conducted during the field surveys. [35] Several visitors, prior to visiting Santa, expected a fully abandoned ancient site. Thus, the term 'ruins' inaccurately represents the settlement's ongoing nature and composition, at least within the Turkish context, the settlement's ongoing nature and composition as a continuing cultural landscape, even though the site's ruinous appearance adds new layers of value to Santa.

Finally, the concept of a 'site with a memorial aspect', rooted in the memorial value of the site, more effectively conveys the enduring connection of the Rum community to the area. This term helps clarify the complex, sometimes conflicting, values (and memories) held by both the Rum and Turkish communities, while also highlighting the area's significance to them. By recognizing the cultural importance of the site and fostering a deeper understanding of its historical and social context, it becomes possible to address the challenges and obstacles facing Santa through conservation policies that are specifically tailored to its unique circumstances.

In the process, it is also essential to adopt a 'nuanced approach' when addressing the diverse perceptions and needs of memory within affected communities, whether local or displaced. Equally important is the careful presentation and negotiation of sensitive memories since the way a particular memory is framed and communicated

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34 For a comparison of the conservation statuses of the villages of Sazak and Kayaköy, see Abay 2023 (with bibliography).

35 With domestic visitors (V1-V6).

can lead to significantly different responses. Furthermore, as Gustav Wollentz (2020: 154) opines, places of remembrance and places of hope are mutually constituted; many memorials include explicit or implicit calls to shape the future, often through the aspiration that a traumatic event, such as the compulsory displacement of peoples, will never be repeated.

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List of Interviewees

Local Inhabitants:
L 1: Female, housewife
L 2: Male (profession unknown)
L 3: Male, retired
L 4: Female, housewife
L 5: Male, public employee

Visitors:
V1: Female, from the Black Sea Region (Rize)
V2: Male, from the Black Sea Region (Rize)
V3: Male, from southern Türkiye (Hatay)
V4: Male, from Central Anatolia (Ankara)
V5: Female, from the Marmara Region (İstanbul)
V6: Female, from the Black Sea Region (Trabzon)

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13. Invisible Devastation and Successful Re-Settlement in the German *Heimatfilm*:

The Case of Waldwinter/Glocken der Heimat (1956)

Daniel Siemens

Keywords *Heimatfilm*; Reconstruction; Critical Heritage; Re-Settlement; National community

Abstract This essay uses Wolfgang Liebeneiner's 1956 feature film *Waldwinter* – literally 'Winter in the Woods' (also marketed as *Glocken der Heimat* – 'Bells of the Homeland') to demonstrate how popular stories of successful re-settlement in the West German *Heimatfilm* contributed to rendering invisible the destruction that accompanied the forced displacement of ethnic Germans from Central and Eastern Europe between 1944 and 1948. While resettlement is a feature that is repeatedly discussed in secondary literature on the *Heimatfilm* genre, the trauma of flight and expulsion, and also – somehow counter-intuitively – the invisibility of the lost homeland in these films is comparatively rarely explored.[1]

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[1] For pioneering overviews of the different aspects of the Heimatfilm genre see Trimborn 1988; as well as Projektgruppe Deutscher Heimatfilm/Jürgen Kaschuba 1989. For more recent specialist studies that include analyses of Waldwinter, see Szöllösi-Janze 1993; Moeller 2021; Moltke 2005; Feistauer 2017; Tiews 2017. For a competing vision of Heimat film, see Ashkenazi 2020.

Daniel Siemens: Invisible Devastation and Successful Re-Settlement in the German *Heimatfilm:* The Case of Waldwinter/ Glocken der Heimat (1956). In: Lekakis, S. et al. (eds.), Towards an Archaeology of Devastation: Breaking/Replacing the People-Place Connection in Landscape. Heidelberg: heiBOOKS 2026, p. 287–305, DOI: https://doi.org/10.11588/heibooks.1613.c24612.

Introduction

Waldwinter/Glocken der Heimat is in many ways a typical *Heimatfilm* and as such is often treated with scorn by cinéastes and contemporary audiences. In the 1950s, however, the film successfully catered for – and capitalised on – particular needs of West German post-war society and here above all the approximately eight million refugees that had resettled after the war in the Western zones of occupation, where they often experienced hostility from the regular inhabitants.[2] Previous film-historical research, most notably by Robert G. Moeller and Johannes von Moltke and more recently by Verena Feistauer and Alina Tiews, has focused above all on the film's contribution to fusing the capitalist modernisation in post-World War II West Germany with traditional notions of *Heimat*, customs, traditions, and heritage. (Moeller 2001 : 135–140; Moltke 2007: 74–90; Feistauer 2017: 225–288). In what follows I will attempt to also explore what remained more under the surface in this film: the devastation by war and expulsion and the discreet traumas that many of the refugees carried with them for the rest of their lives.

In this regard, it was fitting that the outdoor scenes were filmed in the wintery and snowy hills of the Bavarian Forest around the small city of Viechtach, allegedly depicting both the lost (old) Heimat in Silesia as well as the new home in the fictitious village of Falkenstein in Bavaria. To tell the story of successful relocation and economic modernisation of an entire expellee community (where hierarchies remained surprisingly stable despite all that had happened and no one goes missing), much of the most recent past had literally to be covered in snow. In *Waldwinter* as in many other films of the genre, nature was portrayed as stable, potentially eternal, and as the foundation for German refugees to regain moral and religious strength and the energy needed to overcome worldly obstacles. It was ultimately the skills of the people that prove decisive for their successful adaptation and integration in German post-war society. By their solidarity, they survive even in harsh, wintery conditions – in real life but also metaphorically. Devastation and loss was at the origin of this story, but it was overcome – so the film wants us to believe – by a readjustment and successful updating of a Heimat that was ultimately surprisingly transferable.

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[2] On the ethnic German expellees, their integration and the policies of their lobby groups in post-war West Germany, see Kossert 2008; Ahonen 2003; Levy 2002: 19–37; Benz 1995.

A film and its context: The remake of *Waldwinter* in the 1950s

Waldwinter/Glocken der Heimat from 1956 is loosely based on the 1902 novel *Waldwinter* by the Silesian novelist Paul Keller who was among the best-selling German authors in the first half of the twentieth century.[3] It was also a remake of a first movie with the same title from 1936 which had been directed by Fritz Peter Buch[4]. The new post-war version was produced at the peak of the *Heimatfilm* wave by the Apollo-Filmproduktion GmbH, a Berlin-based film company founded by Willie Hoffmann-Andersen in 1950.[5] He was a Berlin-born film producer who had first been married to a Jewish wife. Because of 'difficulties at work', as Hoffmann-Andersen later claimed, the couple decided to emigrate in 1935. They spent most of the Nazi dictatorship in exile in Italy and later in the Serbian capital of Belgrade until 1944, when Hoffmann-Andersen returned to Berlin and Austria for the remaining months of the war.[6] Between 1950 and 1956, his company produced 14 feature films for the entertainment of the lighter sorts, usually love stories. It is unclear how commercially successful these films were, but the quick succession in which they were produced suggests that there was money to be made from the genre.

The official film poster combines key elements of the genre: A love story is set against a beautiful winter forest populated by deer, with mountains and a church in the distance, but it also contains a hint of conflict and violence, epitomised by a hunter who is ready to shoot, his rifle pointing loosely in the direction of the viewer (Figure 13.1). In an interview with the *Film-Echo* in 1953, Hoffmann-Andersen admitted that the films he produced were not intended to be 'works of art' but to 'create joy and relaxation for the working people and continuous employment for a large number of artists and technicians.'[7] Some of these films like *Ännchen von Tharau* [Annie from Tharau] from 1954, named after a well-known folk song from Eastern Prussia, also addressed the fate of German refugees and their arrival in the Western Zones of Occupation, which were to form the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949. *Waldwinter* was the last film produced by Hoffmann-Andersen before he abruptly ended his engagement in film; his company dissolved (Frenzel and Moser 1956: 297–298; Glenzdorf 1961: 696).

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[3] By 1938, Keller's book was printed in more than 500.000 copies, see Keller 1938.

[4] Fritz Peter Buch, dir., Waldwinter, Universum-Film AG (UF), premiere: 14 July 1936.

[5] In 1956, a record-breaking 36 percent of all films produced in West Germany belonged to this category, see Ashkenazi 2020.

[6] Information according to an handwritten CV from Willie Hoffmann-Andersen, in: German Exile Archive 1933–1945, Archiv Günter Peter Straschek, 'Konvolut von Unterlagen zu Willie Hoffmann-Andersen', EB 2012/153-D.01.1374.

[7] 'Wir stellen vor: Willie Hoffmann-Andersen', in: *Film-Echo* 7 (1953), No. 11 from 14 March: 296, in: ibid.

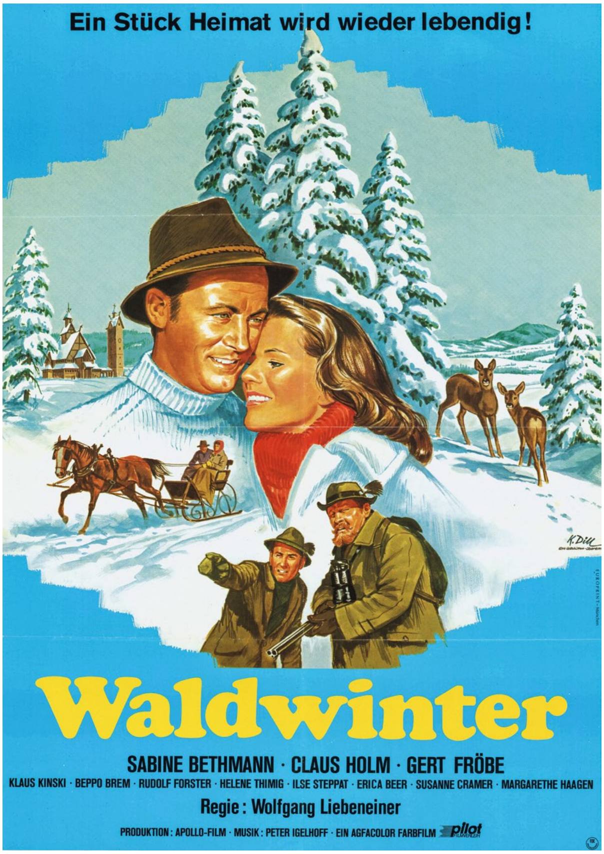
Ein Stück Heimat wird wieder lebendig!
Waldwinter
SABINE BETHMANN · CLAUS HOLM · GERT FRÖBE
KLAUS KINSKI · BEPPO BREM · RUDOLF FORSTER · HELENE THIMIG · ILSE STEPPAT · ERICA BEER · SUSANNE CRAMER · MARGARETHE HAAGEN
Regie: Wolfgang Liebeneiner
PRODUKTION: APOLLO-FILM · MUSIK: PETER IGELHOFF · EIN AGFACOLOR FARBFILM pilot
K.Dill

Fig 13.1
Film poster for Waldwinter by Apollo-Film Berlin, 1955/56 (Deutsches Film Institut & Filmmuseum [DFF], Frankfurt am Main).

The plot of the *Waldwinter* remake tells a rather conventional love story against the background of the conflict between urban modernity and rural lifestyles and values, ideal-typically embodied by the two main female characters who compete for the love of Martin (Claus Holm), the male hero of the film. One of them is Martin's girlfriend Simone (Erica Beer), a beautiful fashion designer from Paris, who stands for the temptations of the cosmopolitan and urban modern world. Her rival is the equally beautiful Marianne (Sabine Bethmann), the foster daughter of village patriarch Baron Malte (Rudolf Forster) and a fierce patriot who rebels against a possible sale of the castle and its alternative use as a hotel. At the same time, she also fights for a future of the glassworks in Falkenstein that provides work for the refugee community, a community that the film depicts a keeping to themselves, defined by the refugee experience and Silesian heritage.

As the Baron explains, the preservation of the artisanal glassmaking industry rebuilt in Bavaria after the war was not least an attempt to 'rescue a piece of Silesia,' but the financial pressures of the day weigh heavily on him.[8] Work and homeland are thus inextricably intertwined in Falkenstein, and both are constantly at risk. Martin, returning to the new home of his grandparents after an absence of ten years, initially wavers between the two very different women. He needs to decide between two visions of the future they represent: Should he follow the appeal of a modern urban and lavish lifestyle or seek fulfilment and happiness that come with hard work and loyalty to one's heritage and upbringing? What mattered more, internationalism or national belonging, leisure or labour? As is typical for the genre, after some twists and turns the hero is won over by the naturalness and authenticity of the German woman. He recognises that true love and personal fulfilment can only be achieved by embracing and honouring the values of the German ethnic community to which he ultimately belongs (and which he has previously defended as a German soldier, one might add). As one contemporary reviewer summarised it: 'The fate of a young man who drifts around in our world, which has gone off the rails, until he realises where he belongs.'[9] Marianne and Martin, the son who returned home to his national community and now takes on the tasks of the day, and Marianne, the embodiment of social responsibility and the defender of tradition, marry.[10] This outcome is even respected by Marianne's former rival Simone, who sends a wedding veil from Paris as a sign of her approval.[11]

Germans in the 1950s were familiar with this kind of message, not least because the importance of their national community (defined in racial terms) had been a core feature of Nazi ideology (See Steber and Gotto 2014). The film team of *Waldwinter* was well acquainted with this ideology, too. Some of the people working on the film had played an important part in the Nazi film production, notably its director Wolfgang Liebeneiner, who is probably best remembered today for this controversial pro-eugenic propaganda film *Ich klage an* [I accuse] from 1941 that accompanied and was meant to legitimate the killings of patients in German psychiatric hospitals, the infamous T4 Action (Hachmeister 1992). Liebeneiner, who was originally from Silesia himself (born in Liebau, today's Polish Lubawka) had been a key figure in the Nazi cinema for years and even rose to the directorship of the state-owned UFA in 1943, but that did not prevent him from a long and successful career in post-war West Germany and Austria. Next to this 'director for all seasons' (Robert G. Moeller), some of the actors had also been familiar faces in the German cinema during the Third Reich, but there were also others who would only rise to fame in the years to come, most prominently Gerd Fröbe (as senior forestry official Gerstenberg) and Klaus Kinski (as the jealous and demonic Hartwig, a social outsider in the village).

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[8] As quoted in Moeller 2001: 136.

[9] Scala-Lichtspiele Oberkassel', Oberkasseler Zeitung: Heimatzeitung für Oberkassel, Ober- und Niederollendorf und Römlinghoven, 16 November 1956: 3.

[10] For an extensive summary of the film's plot, see Feistauer 2017: 226-288.

[11] The Franco-German reconciliation, promoted by the French President Charles de Gaulle and the West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, finds even expression in people's private lives, one is tempted to add. Similar: Moeller 2001: 140.

Despite the prominence of the topic of flight and expulsion, *Waldwinter* is as much about the present as it is about the past. As Johannes von Moltke has demonstrated, there were real-life examples from post-war Germany that could have served as a template for this remake – or that at least provided some evidence to the contemporary viewers that the story told here was not entirely fictitious. One of these success stories came from the city of Kaufbeuren, a Bavarian mid-size town in the district of Ostallgäu. Approximately 18,000 ethnic Germans who formerly inhabited Gablonz, today's Jablonec nad Nisou in the Czech Republic, and were expelled following the publication of the notorious Beneš Decrees after the Second World War resettled, virtually intact, on the outskirts of Kaufbeuren. This area of the city was called Kaufbeuren-Neugablonz [New Gablonz] from 1952 onwards, in recognition of its new inhabitants. With the help of a very industrious refugee named Erich Huschka a new glassblowing and jewellery industry was set up that not only provided the refugees with work but soon also made a substantial contribution to the economic recovery of Kaufbeuren as a whole (Moltke 2007: 78). Next to Geretsried, Neutraubling, Traunreut and Waldkraiburg, Neugablonz was one of five *Vertriebenenstädte* [cities or city districts for expellees] in Bavaria, all built on former Wehrmacht sites.[12] The expellees and their industries, sometimes referred to as *Flüchtlingsindustrien* [industries of the refugees], quickly became a relevant factor in West Germany's post-war recovery and contributed to the industrial transformation of predominantly agrarian-dominated states like Bavaria.[18] When Waldwinter was shown in the movie theatres in the second half of the 1950s, such success stories of integration through labour and urban development were already visible and thus provided additional legitimacy for the film's message. It was therefore both a national fairy tale and an illustration of the ongoing structural and economic change in 1950s West Germany.

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[12] For an overview, see Renghart 2017.

[13] Moltke 2007: 80. Even today these cities are home to a higher than the average proportion of migrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, which in the present makes these places diverse and multicultural rather than successful examples of relocated, ethnically homogenous Germanness.

From invisible destruction to reconstruction

Most *Heimatfilms* of the 1950s celebrated the German landscapes and more generally the beauty of nature, which allowed them to brush over with the thick line the scars of the immediate past and the many personal catastrophes and emotional and material hardships. The genre-defining and commercially highly successful *Grün ist die Heide* [Green is the Heather] from 1951 which was seen by around 20 million viewers set the tone (Kretzschmar 2016: 40–47; Kossert 2008: 269–271). It combined the indulging in rural landscape images with a societal vision that reinforced established social hierarchies and was in parts openly reactionary, contrasting sharply with the attempts to democratise post-World War Two West Germany at the time. Film scholar Peter Stettner's harsh verdict was: 'whitewashing integration kitsch.' (Stettner 2001: 162). Films like these, including *Waldwinter*, told stories about community life that had never existed in this form, but that the previous National Socialist regime with its ideal of a *Volksgemeinschaft* or 'people's community' had successfully propagated. I would even argue that one reason for the success of the *Heimatfilm* genre during the 1950s was precisely that these films not only evoked the Nazi past (and its long shadow in the present), but sometimes delivered on screen what the Nazis had not managed to achieve in the Third Reich: to create a truly national community of solidarity.[14] Violent conflicts, by contrast, are usually hidden or only indirectly depicted, and in any case remain contained by the serene homeland and the community of its people. The films thus presented an utopian, successful version of a post-Nazi community – one that was only superficially cleansed from obvious symbols of the Nazi past but in essence remained loyal to its core promises.[15] In contrast to critical early 'rubble films' like Wolfgang Staudte's *Die Mörder sind unter uns* [The Murderers Are Among Us] from 1946 that advocated for a clean break with Nazism, many films of the *Heimatfilm* wave in the 1950s actualised and thereby reinforced key ideologemes of the Third Reich (but excluding others like anti-Semitism) and thus provided a much sought-after continuity at a time of rupture and change, at the expense of a critical investigation into the most recent past.

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[14] The same could be said for the Volkswagen car, the Beetle, that was intended as the German equivalent of Ford's T model in the 1930s but that only became available to a wider range of consumers in the 1950s and 1960s; see Rieger 2013.

[15] On the survival and at times even reinforcement of Nazi values in the early post-war years, see also Schulte 2024.

For audiences in the early Federal Republic, going to see a sentimental *Heimatfilm* in the movie theatre was more than a form of escapism. It was also a collective experience that allowed for the outbreak of emotions that Germans were usually told to control if not suppress: the mourning of loss and the longing for a romantic, healthy relationship at a time when many lives were broken, and relationships damaged beyond repair. The film demonstrated that if was possible to rebuild one's own life and the country in a way that was both loyal to traditional values and appropriate to address the challenges of the future. This message was actively supported by the conservative West German government and here in particular by Theodor Oberländer, a former Nazi official and Ostforschung researcher who served from 1953 to 1960 as the Federal Minister for Expellees, Refugees and War-Damaged Persons. In 1955, Oberländer wrote to 40 screenwriters and asked them to produce scripts that would help to remember the 'horrible events that had occurred during flight and expulsion' and to emphasise the 'contribution of the expellees to the economic miracle and their forbearance in the face of their hard fate'.[16] It is not clear whether *Waldwinter* was produced as a direct reaction to such political encouragement, but it fitted perfectly into the picture. Figure 13.2 shows a poster used by the Christian Social Union (CSU), the leading party in Bavaria, that promised 'Work and home for the new citizen' as early as 1946 – a promise that the *Heimatfilms* in the 1950s followed on Figure 13.2.

Along similar lines, the distributor of the film informed cinema theatres in a push for sales that the film's message would appeal above all to the more than two million Silesians meanwhile living in West Germany who would ''starve' for a film like this one' – and consequently advertisement should be tailored to this group in particular (Moltke 2007: 80-81). For a *Heimatfilm* like *Waldwinter* to successfully address these aspects meant to avoid the overtly contaminated aspects of the past and to render invisible the actual destruction of the (former) homeland in the last phase of the Second World War and in the immediate post-war period. The optimistic message of a successful reintegration through work dominated at the expense of a more comprehensive exploration of the painful aspects of loss and nostalgia in the *Heimat* discourse. After the 1950s, it would take two more decades before *Heimat* became a prominent aspect in German culture again, now also increasingly embraced by the leftist-alternative milieu (Becker 2023: 36–39).

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[16] As quoted in Tiews 2017: 87.

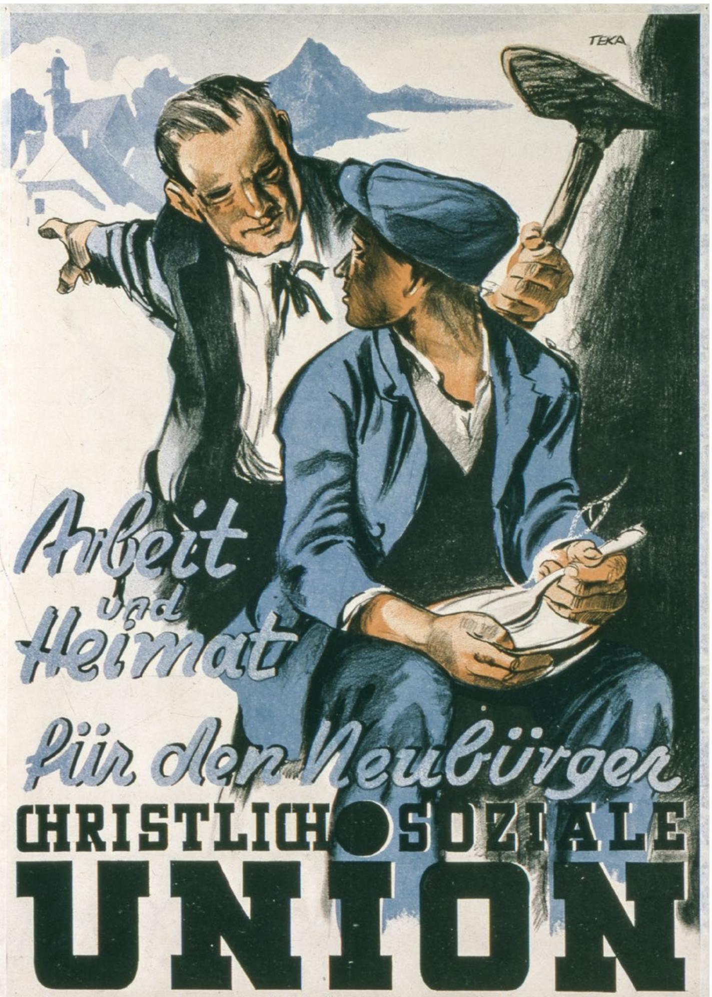
TEKA
Arbeit und Heimat
für den Neubürger
CHRISTLICH-SOZIALE
UNION
Plakat Nr. 35
Verantw. Dr. Josef Müller, München, Gedonstr. 4
Druck: Kunst im Druck-Obpacher AG., München 25 Auflage 15 000

Fig 13.2 Political poster from the Christian Social Union (CSU), 1946: 'Work and home for the new citizen' (Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv, Plak 004-009-028)

A familiar story of flight and loss: The opening scenes

The framework plot of the film confronts the viewer with the military situation of the rapidly advancing Red Army in the winter of 1944/45 which led millions of Germans in the Eastern regions of the Third Reich and in the neighbouring states of Eastern Europe to flee their homes to seek safety further West. For most refugees and expellees their flight/expulsion had been a very painful personal experience, and it remained an open wound for many decades, as not least the high level of organisation in the *Vertriebenverbände* or expellee associations indicates.[17] The opening scenes of *Waldwinter* reminded the audience of these traumatic events and the losses suffered, but they did this in a way that was de-contextualised from the historic reality and that disingenuously glossed over the social problems that these events often brought to the fore and intensified. The devastation of former homes and the mistreatment of people remains completely invisible.

The first scene in the film depicts a Christmas mass in a detached wooden church situated on a hill in a wintery forest landscape in December 1944. A young girl marvels at the wonders of the traditional Christmas pyramid inside the church, and the parish community sings the Silesian Christmas song *Es blühen drei Rosen auf einem Zweig* [Three roses blossom on one branch] that became popular in the nineteenth century.[18] *Waldwinter* thus starts with what people at the time would have referred to as the ‘good old times’ and what we can assume were frequent childhood memories many viewers in the 1950s could relate to, even if wooden churches were in fact not very frequent in Silesia. The famous and still standing Vang Stave Church, located in Krummhübel, today’s Karpacz in the Karkonosze mountains in Poland, after which the church in *Waldwinter* was loosely modelled (as is made explicit by the Baroness in one of the last scenes of the movie), (Feistauer 2017: 249). was in fact only brought to the region from Norway in the first half of the nineteenth century. It was re-assembled on order of King Frederick William IV of Prussia and newly consecrated on 28 July 1844. That this initially Scandinavian church, built in the twelve or thirteenth century, could serve as a signifier for a lost German Heimat in the 1950s is a classic case of an invention of tradition (Rösner 2006; Feistauer 2017: 248–251).

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[17] On the history of these expellee organisations and the emotional toll off light and resettlement, see Kossert 2008*:* 139–185; Ahonen 2003*:* 15–116. Not all expellees agreed with the official policies of these expellee organisations, however, see Hahn and Hahn: 531–541.

[18] On the importance of folk songs in the *Heimatfilms* see Eschbach 1989*:* 17–19.

The idyllic opening scenery is interrupted by the arrival of Martin, who drives up the snowy hill with a bucket car just when the Christmas mass is about to end. The village community of Querseiffen – here the film uses the name of an existing village north of Krummhübel, today's Płóczki – gathers outside the church and welcomes the new arrival. As becomes immediately clear, Martin is a much liked and respected man of this community who serves in the Wehrmacht and, in this capacity, brings bad news: the frontline is rapidly approaching, and there is no alternative to a complete evacuation of the village within the next 48 hours. The reaction of the churchgoers fluctuates between disbelief and pragmatic ad hoc emergency planning. Their alleged innocence is entirely unrealistic, however, given the extent to which the war, by then already in its sixth year, had dominated the lives and the thinking of most people including those in remote rural corners of Silesia in the winter of 1944/45. Young men were not allowed to be evacuated at all.

It is revealing to see who provides leadership in this acutely dangerous situation. Authority in the film is highly gendered and exercised by the young and modern man Martin (driving a car, dressed in Wehrmacht uniform) as well as by his grandfather, the Baron, who represents traditional values and the established order.[19] Together, the two stand for the allegedly harmoniously working together of the (relatively new) Nazi authority and the (established) landed gentry in difficult times. Despite the hopeless military situation, Martin even brings presents for his family: coffee and a bottle of cognac. Following his grandson's idea, the Baron suggests without much deliberation that the entire community should move to the Bavarian village of Falkenstein, where he would still own an old castle and could accommodate everyone. Even if some villagers express fear of permanent loss ('My husband is still at war' and 'Who knows whether we'll see Silesia ever again?'), the community subjects itself to the counsel of the two men without complaints nor panic. The destruction of the homeland is inevitable, as Martin makes clear: 'In three days there will be fighting here, no house will be left standing.' The devastation has been announced but remains an event of the immediate future.

Interestingly, the religious authority in the village, the priest, has no role to play in the entire film – not in the case of the emergency planning nor during the mess before, even though the respective scenes take place in a church and later in its forecourt area. He is only visible for a moment, standing in the choir, but remains without voice. While the film uses the church building and the religious ceremonies including direct references to the Patron Saint Hedwig of Silesia to evoke powerful sentimental feelings for the lost homeland, it does not suggest that consolation nor future-oriented planning could be provided by the clergy. This, again, was more in line with Nazi ideology than with the social realities of the post-war years that saw a revival of religiosity and a strengthening of the position of the two main Christian churches, not least among the expellees (Alvis 2010: 827–859; Kossert 2008: 229–268; Connor 1985: 399–421; more sceptical: Großbölting 2013: 21–94).

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[19] Not entirely without reason, the press in the GDR mocked the 'noble and generous landowner' in *Waldwinter* as a distorted image of the German landed gentry that was not known as a hotbed of social conscience and reform, see M. H., 'Die Filmfabrik des Todes', in: *Berliner Zeitung,* No. 186 from 6 August 1958: 3.

This opening sequence ends by showing a large of group of villagers walking out of sight down a snowy hill, returning to their village to prepare for the imminent departure. The iconography of this scene was carefully modelled on documentary photographs of actual refugee treks, images that were deeply ingrained in the collective memory of the Germans in the post-war period. Figure 13.3, a photograph that depicts the flight of German refugees by sledge from Eastern Prussia in December 1944, can serve as an example of this kind of 'visual repertoire' in the post-war years (Figure 13.3).[20] For this reason, *Waldwinter* did not have to show the actual flight (and thus it did not have to violate a cinematographic taboo in the *Heimatfilm*) to evoke these deep-seated and often traumatic experiences among the audience.[21] As Robert G. Moeller pointedly remarked, 'marauding Russians' had generally 'no place in the *Heimatfilm*, though a decade after the war viewers certainly did not need explicit references to know the manifold meanings of expulsion from the east.' (Moeller 2001: 135) The actors were also sufficiently detached from the camera, walking away from it, so that neither faces nor any other details were revealed. One might say that for these moments the film continued more in the imagination of the audience than on screen.

After a few seconds, the camera pans down towards the snow-covered soil where the footprints of the villagers/refugees are still visible. It then slowly moves up again and now depicts a different scenario, ten years later, showing the snow-covered surroundings of the Bavarian village of Falkenstein, the place where the Silesian refugees have meanwhile resettled. The snow has a double function here: it provides for continuity between the old and new *Heimat*, but it also covers everything that might have happened in the decade between the flight from Silesia in late 1944 and the moment when the (former) refugees feel at home in their new environment. That by now they are a legitimate part of the post-war society is made clear immediately, as the scene continues by showing a man who nails a new wooden name sign for Falkenstein on a post, made in the Silesian fashion, as he proudly remarks to his wife and children who surround him. The children already speak with the local Bavarian accent, which further emphases how smoothly they fit in. The man adds the new place sign to the existing two. One of these older one's points to Neu-Querseiffen, the newly built part of the Falkenstein village that is inhabited by the expellees, and the other shows the direction to the local train station. These two older signs thus reference the past and the future, with Frankenstein representing the present.

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[20] Moltke 2007: 74, following the pioneering analysis by Moeller 2001. Eva and Hans Henning Hahn have argued that such images are also reminiscent of the 'death marches' of concentration camp inmates at the last months of the war. To connect these death marches with the expulsions of the German minorities (a 'Holocaust on the open road', as one refugee spokesperson said) relativized the Holocaust, they argue Hahn and Hahn 2010: 506–507. On the non-Jewish German victimization in the *Heimatfilm* of the 1950s, see also Ashkenazi 2020: 116–117.

[21] My analysis here follows Moltke 2005: 137; Moltke 2007: 75.

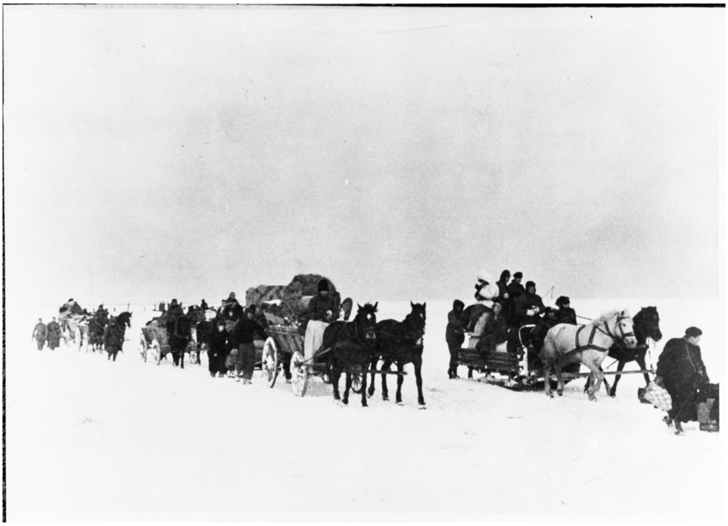

Fig 13.3 German refugees with sledges, Eastern Prussia in December 1944 (Bundesarchiv-Bildarchiv, Bild 183-R77440)

This opening scene is emblematic for the remainder of the film that repeatedly evokes the past yet completely glosses over the horrors of the flights that had often been chaotic and marked by despair. From now on *Waldwinter* focusses predominantly on the successful new beginning of the former Silesian village community in their new homeland that they also take symbolically possession of.

Re-actualising or overwriting memory? The final scenes

Although Silesia the lost homeland remains a sentimental topic in the dialogues of the film, there are no flashbacks until the end. The Silesian past, while it continues to be remembered among the refugees, ultimately remains inaccessible territory. And yet, the happy end of the film does not only see the two main characters marry, but it also celebrates the reconciliation of the old and new homeland by symbolically merging the two. The final scene of *Waldwinter* shows the Baron and the Baroness, accompanied by their butler and the Forestry official, on a sledge ride through the forests around Falkenstein. At one time, they discover of a wooden church in the near distance that looks very similar to the one in their former Silesian village. ‘My god, our old church!’, the Baron exclaims, and his wife adds ‘The Vang Church!’ – thus confirming for the first time the historical model of the film church. The Forester clarifies: ‘We have rebuilt it exactly as it was in Silesia. Not everything is right, but…’[22] This last sentence could also serve as a motto for the entire film that ends on an optimistic note while keeping a little ‘but.’

Next to the sight of the new church, the ex-Silesians in Frankenstein are also touched by the bells of their former church. Their sound stands for the lost but now equally also for the newly found homeland. This all is made possible not by the generosity of the (old) Baron – as one might have expected –, but by the young couple Marianne and Martin, thus also indicating a generational change and that the economic problems in Falkenstein are overcome. They lead the village community in a new, West German future that is still somehow connected to the Silesian past but not trapped in this memory.

That the filmmakers used a church tower (and its reconstruction) to represent the former as well as the new homeland was well chosen, as film historian Verena Feistauer explains by citing Alon Confino’s analysis of the symbolic meaning of church towers in German culture: ‘The church tower evoked the sounds of bells, which was a traditional symbol of a community. […] The church tower, therefore, symbolized not only a locality, but also its people. It was a center of communal life. […] It was noticeable enough to emphasize human community and modest enough to express the harmonious relations between nature and man. Perhaps more important, the church tower, historically old, represented history itself, the roots and immemorial times of the community.’[36] As the film and the history of the Vang church indicate, this even works for those churches and church towers that are relocated from one place to another. Heimat is ultimately an attribution that does not rely on historical accurateness but emotions and appropriation.

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[22] The dialogues are translated from Feistauer 2017: 249.

[23] Confino 2006: 46–47, as quoted in Feistauer 2017: 250.

The reconstruction of the former village church thus makes partly good for the loss and the (in the film invisible) devastation of the lost *Heimat*, but at the same time it serves as a gentle reminder of this painful not-too-distant past. The loss is made bearable by the economic success and the completed reintegration into post-war society, or so the film suggests: The former Silesians thrive in their new surroundings, like the bells that function in the reconstructed church equally well as before in Silesia. But the parallel goes even further. The church bells that can be heard far and wide do also announce the expellees' claim of recognition and participation and symbolically confirm their important place in West German society.

Coming to terms with material and emotional loss, or another 'inability to mourn'

One of the film posters for *Waldwinter* advertised it with the bold promise *'Ein Stück Heimat wird wieder lebendig!'* – 'A piece of homeland comes to life again!' While everyone at the time understood that this message could not be taken literally and was rather an exaggerated promise for marketing reasons, contemporary film critics by and large bought into this message and enforced it. One reviewer pointed out that the film was by no means only a 'sentimental little story' but an 'honest, neat, and lively' attempt to help German audiences to come to terms with the loss of homeland in the 1940s.[24] 'Homeland, nature and love in a joyful triad,' another reviewer exclaimed jubilantly, sounding as if he or she were citing directly from a film advertisement brochure.[25] The *Filmwoche*, the bi-weekly magazine of the Central Association of German Film Theatres, commented solomonically that Liebeneiner had 'staged without bold ambitions [...] but also without ever falling below the level of good taste'. The outdoor shots in the wintery forest receive a special mention here, including praise for the quality of the film material used (Agfacolor – a German brand from the Bayer and Agfa AG). The reviewer in the *Filmwoche* also does not fail to note that the 'lost homeland could only be commemorated with words in this film' – alluding to the impossibility to film on the other side of the Iron Curtain but avoiding a more in-depth analysis.[26]

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[24] As quoted in Moeller 2001*:* 135.

[25] 'Scala-Lichtspiele Oberkassel', Oberkasseler Zeitung: Heimatzeitung für Oberkassel, Ober- und Niederollendorf und Römlinghoven, 16 November 1956: 3.

[26] R. N., 'Waldwinter', in: *Filmwoche: Fachzeitschrift für das deutsche Filmwesen* 11 (1956), No. 16 from 14 April: 7.

Although *Waldwinter* and its initial reception in the late 1950s is a case of the 'commingling of silence and memory' (Confino 1985: 239-243), the film came up with a more realistic scenario than, for example, the German expellee associations that advocated for a 'right to return' until the 1990s (Demshuk 2012: 523–556). *Waldwinter* celebrated the achievements of the present more than it lamented about the past. It depicted the Silesian refugees as the 'vanguard of postwar modernization, clad in provincial dress,' as Johannes von Moltke aptly remarked (Moltke 2007: 77). That this forward-looking attitude came at a price, was recognised long ago. Most prominently, the psychoanalysts Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich argued in their influential book *The Inability to Mourn,* originally published in German in 1967, that the emphasis on reconstruction and a fresh start often went hand in hand with the denial of the past that, for this reason, could not be mastered but only repressed (Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich 1975. For a critical re-evaluation of their thesis, see Freimüller, and Mitscherlich 2007).

By the late 1950s, the lost Silesian homeland had become the new Polish 'Wild West', where another group of refugees put down new roots. Many of them were ethnic Poles from territories further East that had been incorporated into the Soviet Union (Belorussia and Ukraine), following the Potsdam Conference from July-August 1945. The southern parts of the *Sudetenland* were now again a part of Czechoslovakia. These new political realities and their consequences remained anathema in the *Heimatfilm* of the 1950s – maybe not surprising if one considers that they also remained highly disputed in West Germany politics at least until the 1970s, which saw Willy Brandt's new eastern policy. These films presented highly ethnicized and exclusive visions of the former homelands, suggesting that the end of the Third Reich in 1945 was also an end of (German) history, at least when it came to the German settlements in many parts of Eastern Europe.[27] It would take decades before the re-use of buildings and material objects formerly in the possession of Germans in Silesia, but also the destruction and devastation that had occurred in this appropriation, became the subject of academic and public interest, in Poland and Germany alike.[28]

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[27] For a similar tendency in the memory and idealization of the Bukowina, see Fisher 2020: 155–201.

[28] Among the latest publications on this topic: Kuszyk 2022 (initially in Polish: *Poniemieckie,* Sekowa: Czarne, 2019). For the *Sudetenland,* see for example Vařeka and Vařeková 2016: 225-244.

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Biography

Daniel Siemens is Professor of European History at Newcastle University/UK and a specialist on twentieth-century Germany with its transnational and global entanglements. He has published widely on European and transatlantic history, incl. *Stormtroopers: A New History of Hitler’s Brownshirts* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017). His latest book is *Hinter der ‘Weltbühne’: Hermann Budzislawski und das 20. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Aufbau, 2023; published in English as *Writing Against Hitler: Hermann Budzislawski and the Making of Twentieth-Century Socialism,* Madison/Wisconsin: Wisconsin University Press, 2025). Siemens is currently working on a global history of the United Restitution Organisation (URO), a Jewish legal aid organisation founded in London in 1948 that represented hundreds of thousands of clients in restitution proceedings until 2009.

Heritage Reflections

14. Interaction of Past and Present in Conflict Seen Through the Prism of Three Great Eurasian Empires

Carsten Paludan-Müller

Keywords Conflict; Empire; History; Heritage; Narrative; Nation-Building; Legitimisation; Peace-Building

Introduction

When seminal events happen that distinguish a before from an after, we try to understand them by looking back from a transformed perspective. We reinterpret the past with new concerns to help us find meaning, faith, and direction.

A revised narrative about the past may sustain our self-understanding as victims, revengers, conquerors, bystanders – or peace brokers. Narratives can only be created on a more or less selective basis in the records from the past. There will always be a selection of the evidence, but it matters what was included and what was excluded, and whether there is room for a plurality of perspectives and narratives, or not. The simpler the narrative, the more selective its evidence. Sometimes the narratives will be pointing back to a 'golden age': the time when 'we' were 'great'. A time before things turned bad, when some betrayed us and others took what was ours. The historic narrative is a formidable legitimatising asset in politics, and so is the cultural heritage with which we chose to substantiate our narratives. The monumental buildings, the towns, villages, and cultural landscapes can make the historic narrative tangible. They mark the territory with insignias of people who once lived, or still live here. This chapter explores examples of the roles of history and heritage in apocalyptic conflict. It also discusses how we may use history and heritage to prevent or to heal conflict.

Carsten Paludan-Müller: Interaction of Past and Present in Conflict Seen Through the Prism of Three Great Eurasian Empires. In: Lekakis, S. et al. (eds.), Towards an Archaeology of Devastation: Breaking/Replacing the People-Place Connection in Landscape. Heidelberg: heiBOOKS 2026, p. 309–331, DOI: https://doi.org/10.11588/heibooks.1613.c24614.

Breaking World Orders

The third decade of the 21st century has accentuated the breakup of the Western dominated world order. It reached its apogee with the unipolar moment of US-American hegemony following the collapse of the Soviet-Russian Empire. Today, re-emerging great powers such as China and India challenge Western domination with growing economic, technological, and military clout. They expose inconsistent Western adherence to liberal democracy and rules-based order, to propose authoritarianism as a valid alternative. The emerging multipolarity seems to exclude any single hegemonic power.

In other words, the World order is in flux, and we are moving into a new era of diverging perceptions of justice, human rights, and international relations. This confronts the global community with the need to cope with those divergencies, alongside other global issues, such as climate change and their consequences, without excluding peaceful coexistence.

Our understandings of cultures and history are important for understanding ourselves as well as ‘the others’. There are reinterpretations of the past in which Western narratives are questioned – or outright rejected. This is not merely a rejection of colonial narratives of Western civilizational superiority. It is also a reassertion of pride in own culture, values, and identities. But sometimes it comes with an ethno-nationalistic rejection of the multiethnic imperial past before colonization from the West, and before the spread of the nation-state as the ubiquitous standard of statehood.

In order to emphasise their autonomy, re-emerging powers at various levels and successors to former empires such as China (successor to the Qing), India (successor to the Moghul), Turkey (successor to the Ottoman), and Iran (successor to the Safavid) have paradoxically embraced a European concept of history by projecting the idea of a more or less monocultural nation-statehood back into the past. Successor-states of great multiethnic empires are now promoting narratives that play down the cultural diversity that once powered their imperial predecessors with creative energy, socio-economic reach, and political might.

The great Eurasian empires and their role in cultural fusion

The modern concept of cultural heritage and cultural identities is very much a product of the rise throughout the 19th and 20th centuries of the nation-state as the ubiquitous format of statehood. That concept of heritage reflects an effort of rooting the nation-state in the long history as the obvious outcome of people's aspirations through time. Hence, it imposes the nation-state as the lens through which we should understand the past.

However, the central argument of this paper is that we can neither understand the origins of the phenomena we call heritage, nor their roles in our own time without investigating them through a more complex prism, which includes forms of social organisation that preceded the nation-state. It is through the dramatic transformation from empire to nation-states, that we can gain insights into how cultural heritage can become charged with political significance in ways that are divisive and exclusive. But it is also part of the argument that there are alternative ways to understand cultural heritage that can allow us to access its positive potential in prevention of, or healing after, conflict.

To unleash that we shall observe cultural heritage through the prism of three of the greatest empires of Eurasia, from their origins to their breakup into nation-states during the 19th and 20th century.

Central Asia and the Turko-Mongol empires.

The political, cultural, and economic energy that characterised the Turko-Mongol empires cannot be conceived without realization of the flows of people, goods, and ideas within them, between them, and across their vast Central Asian hinterland. Their Eurasian dominance spanned 200 years from the early 13th to the early 15th century. The Turko-Mongol descendants of Chinggis Khan and Timur Lenk and other groups before them, such as Seljuks and Mamluks, established themselves as dynastic rulers over East Asia, South Asia, West Asia, and North Africa.

The Chinggisid-Timurid conquerors imposed apocalyptic levels of violence and destruction, as they swept across the continental expanses to take city upon city and subjugate farming communities. By contemporary victims they were likened to swarms of locusts as they plundered, burned down, killed, enslaved, and abducted. Accordingly, the Turko-Mongols have been characterised as a purely destructive force, without positive contributions to global culture (see for instance Münkler 2023: 113–5).

But the ill reputation, even if well-deserved, does not give us the full picture of the Turko-Mongol impact on Euro-Asian culture. For that we need to include the effects of the transcontinental cultural-economic integration and exchange that was brought about under Chinggisid-Timurid rule (for a compelling analytical survey of the Eastern empires see, for instance, Zarakol 2022).

In the end controlling and protecting farming and transcontinental trade as a tax base made better sense than continued raiding, looting and destruction of productive capacities and infrastructure. Trade was also the source of income of the cities dispersed along the major trajectories of what was more recently dubbed 'The Silk Road'. Under Chinggisid-Timurid conquest, cities were destroyed, and later occasionally also during intra-dynastic wars of succession. But the cities were often rebuilt, and some – such as Samarqand – to new splendours. The transcontinental trade routes and the Yam postal system (Kradin 2021: 506–32) were significantly developed, with emphasis on security and speed to multiply the volume of trade and hence the tax base of the rulers – and for the Yam-system significantly boosting the efficiency of the communication that helped Chinggisid-Timurid control over their vast empire.

Chinggisid-Timurid rulers were highly eclectic and adaptive in their approach to culture. They brought into their services the best administrators, architects, artisans, astronomers/astrologists, cooks, craftsmen, engineers, holy men, mathematicians, merchants, physicians, poets, warriors, and many more. Wherever they settled as rulers into highly urbanized communities (such as the Chinese, Indian and Persian) they assimilated and integrated into that culture, even though they did maintain elements of their pastoral-nomadic warrior culture including their concept of power and politics.

The effect of their rule was an enormous transcontinental exchange of people, material, and immaterial culture, spreading knowledge of silk-, paper-, and porcelain-production from China to the West, of Persian water management systems and gardening across Eurasia, and of food production and raw materials, that has left lasting imprint on everything from architecture, and gastronomy to religion and spirituality across the continent.

Within Turko-Mongol culture shamanism, divination, and astrology were important. Therefore, many of the rulers took an interest in the observation of celestial bodies, and therefore also employed skilled people, for instance from Persia, to build and man observatories. Out of that grew astronomical observations, which also became important within the Moghul Empire.

Cultural diversity within the Moghul Empire

Another Turko-Mongol impact was probably the growth of Sufism within both Sunni and Shia Islam. Sufism is the common term for a number of spiritual and ascetic movements within Islam focusing on trance and mysticism and thus related to the shamanic traditions of Turko-Mongol spirituality – but also able to connect to pre-Islamic spirituality across the lands where Islam became established. In Persian a Sufi devotee is known as a ‘dervish’, and in Arabic as a ‘Faqir’: both words literally mean ‘poor’. Interestingly the word Faqir was also adopted to designate itinerant ascetic holy men within Hinduism. It was often Sufis who were able spiritually to bridge the gap between different religions, making Sufis influential at times with Moghul Shahs, some of whom took a particular undogmatic interest in exploring and bringing together the different religions and spiritualities within their diverse empire.

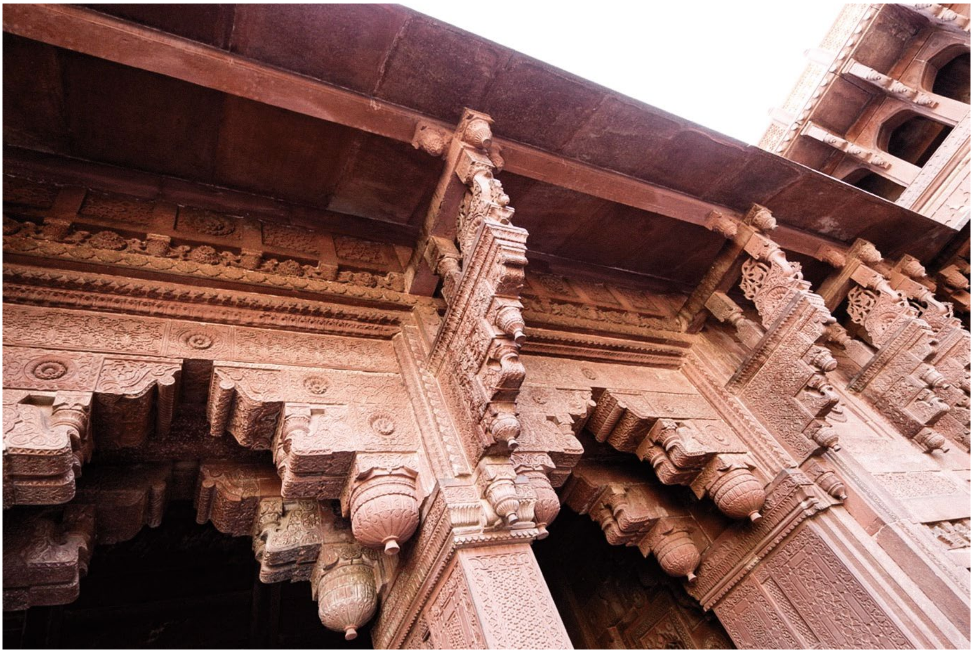

Fig 14.1 Jahangiri Mahal in Agra – the fusion of Islamic doctrines with Hindu Architecture. Details from a courtyard in Jahangiri Mahal, the Red Fort in Agra, Uttar Pradesh. Here we see the syncretism of Mughal architecture. The overall style of ornamentation is clearly referring to Hindu architecture. Yet it also respects the Sunni Islamic prohibition against human and animal depictions. Among the plant motives the Lotus is prominent. It is a common symbol of enlightenment in both Islam and Hinduism. But it is particularly prominent within the latter. Figure 14.1 Photo © C. Paludan-Müller 2017

An example is the third Moghul emperor, Shah Akbar (1556–1605 CE). He encouraged the development of Moghul architecture to underpin his syncretic program of support for the cultural diversity found within his empire. This is prominently exemplified by the Jahangiri Mahal in Agra, and by Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar's marvellous, but short-lived new capital near Agra. Akbar was closely connected to Sheik Selim Chishti of the Chishti Sufi order (Eaton 2019: 75–6). Chishti Sufism came to India from Afghanistan during the 13th Century (CE) with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526). It is named after Chishti, a village near Herat in today's Afghanistan, where it originated. Chishti, like Sufism elsewhere became a mediator between Islam and indigenous spirituality. The Chishti order was close to political power – especially to the Moghuls (Buresi 2015: 36–7, 86).

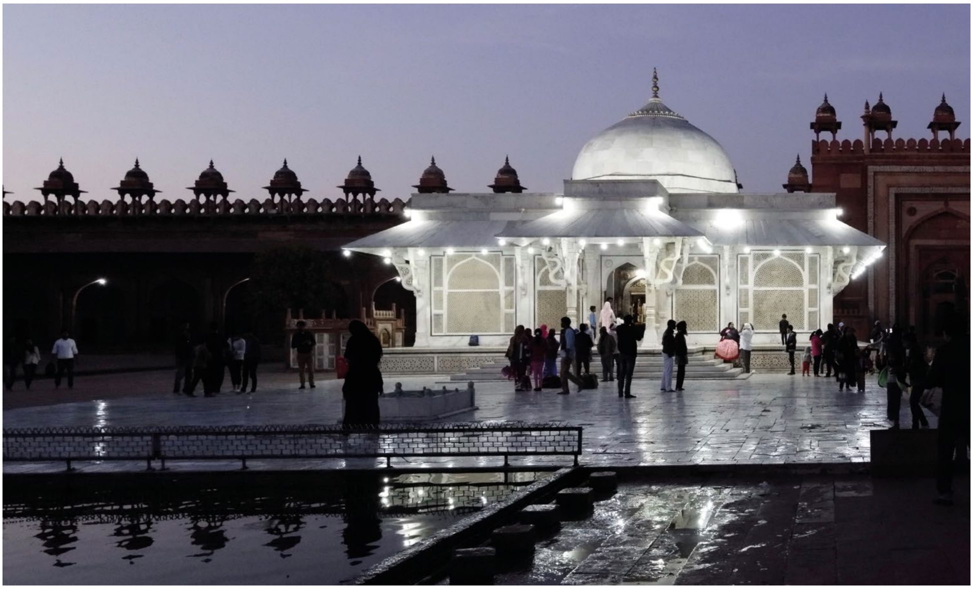

Fig 14.2 Fatehpur Sikri — a Splendid Example of Moghul Cultural Syncretism. Sheikh Selim Chishti's tomb at the courtyard of Akbar's Palace in Fatehpur Sikri, Uttar Pradesh. People still come here to pray to Selim as a Sufi saint. The entire royal complex with the tomb and the mosques is an eminent example of the syncretic Mughal architecture's blend of Persianate and local Hindi (Rajput) elements. Fatehpur Sikri was made capital in honour of the Sufi saint, Sheikh Selim Chishti, who died there in 1572, and then abandoned shortly after its completion due to shortage of water.
Photo © C. Paludan-Müller 2017.

Even though the Moghul rulers were Muslims, the majority population of their empire adhered to a variety of other religions usually subsumed under a common (but vaguely defined) denominator as 'Hindu', including Jain, Buddhism, and Sikhism. That demography also helps explain the openness of most Moghul Shahs towards other religions, their encouragement of interreligious exchanges, and their support for translation of classic Hindu literature from Sanskrit into Persian – the language of the court. That openness remained a more or less prominent characteristic of the Moghul rulers until the late 17th century (Dale 2010: 101–5).

However, Shah Aurungzeb's rule (1658–1707) brought an end to the policy of religious tolerance and balancing of interests between local rulers and central power. Aurungzeb engaged in constant military campaigning to expand Moghul territory and centralised control. His intolerant policy towards non-Muslims together with his unreconciling treatment of defeated local rulers diverged fatally from the policies pursued by most of his predecessors. It became destructive for the cohabitation across religious and political borders.

Local rulers had always been important in the Moghul power equation based on a trade-off between their loyalty to the Moghul Shah as the hegemonic supreme ruler, and the Shah's respect for their rights, interests, and local religions. To strengthen bonds of loyalty daughters of local Hindu rulers were married into the Moghul dynasty.

Through Mughal history there had been occasional conflicts between Shahs and some local rulers, for instance during fratricidal wars of succession. But when the succession was concluded, relations of loyalty would normally be re-established between local rulers and the throne.

None of Aurungzeb's successors could muster the strength to control and balance the centrifugal forces of the diverse imperial territories that he had held or brought under central control with coercive and short-sighted means.

The result was a steady weakening of central Mughal power and a strengthening of local rulers, each pursuing their particular interests. That led to volatility and increasing fragmentation of the empire, laying it open for a gradual transformation into a de facto British colony. First, it opened the door for EIC (the English East India Company) as a powerful player with increasing economic, military, and territorial basis for building a dominant political position by manipulating shifting constellations of local rulers, while reducing the Mughal Shahs to marionettes. After the catastrophic Sepoy mutiny of 1857–58 against the EIC, the Company was dissolved and the last Mughal Shah deposed, and exiled to Rangoon, Burma (now Yangon, Myanmar)[1].

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[1] The interaction and balance between internal and external factors in the collapse of the Mughal Empire is discussed among historians and political scientist. See for instance Ayşe Zarakol, *Before The West, The Rise and Fall of Eastern World Order* (Cambridge 2022): 167–172. Andrew Phillips and J.C. Sharman, *International order in diversity, war, trade, and rule in the Indian Ocean.* (Cambridge University Press, New York 2015): 169–181

India then also formally became a British colony for the next 90 years. But in some ways, it was also a continuation of the Mughal Empire, manned by a vast layer of Indian officials and soldiers. On a symbolic level the British continued certain Mughal ceremonials demonstrating loyalty of local rulers to their supreme ruler – a loyalty now transferred to the British Queen Victoria (now Empress of India), and her successors.

During the British colonisation balances of power between Muslims and Hindus were disrupted, with the latter more successful in advancing their social positions within trade, civil service, and military. A new Hindu elite succeeded within education, and in navigating the complexities of a modernising urban-centred economy. The Muslim elite remained a primarily rural based class of landowners. Hindus could also be major landowners, as in Bengal, but they mostly remained in their urban residences. The vast majority of the Indian population whether Hindu or Muslim lived outside of the cities. They were farmers, tenants, or rural workers – many living in great poverty.

For their respective elites, the question of how power and privilege was to be distributed in a postcolonial India was highly important and a matter for which they agitated in an increasingly tense atmosphere among the less privileged members of their religious communities (Chapman 2000: 127–53). They began to organise themselves towards the end of the 19th century.

Considering itself as representing the majority, the Hindu elite advocated for a multicultural secular state encompassing all of India, as the obvious consequence of history also before British rule. For the Muslim elite this was an unsecured position, in consideration of the much smaller Muslim share (c. 25%) of the total population, and the weakening of their position during British rule. Accordingly, they argued for some sort of division to secure a territorial base with a clear Muslim majority.

In 1885 The Indian Congress held its inaugural meeting in Bombay, with the aspiration (as the name indicates) of eventually becoming the national parliament of India. But the membership was never a proportional representation of the population. The Muslim minority was underrepresented in the Congress. So, in 1906 in Dhaka the Muslims founded their All-India Muslim League, to counterbalance their underrepresentation in the Congress and challenge its claim to legitimacy as a future parliamentary body with legislative powers.

In the context of the peace conferences after the First World War, in which many Indians fought, a discussion arose on the illegitimacy of the continental European empires on the losing side. Both Vladimir Lenin, leader of the Russian revolution and US President Woodrow Wilson had denounced empires as 'prisons of people'. This interpretation was refused by European colonial powers as not valid beyond Europe (Manela 2007: 35–3 and 77–97). Yet, the denouncement of empires within Europe further encouraged colonised people overseas to confront the obvious hypocrisy and strengthen their demand for an end to foreign rule. And during the following decades a British exit from India looked increasingly inevitable, as did a European exit from overseas colonies in general. The Second World War halted that development for a while, but also encouraged it after the War. Once more, troops from the colonies had fought on the side of the allied against Japan, Germany, and Italy. But not with the aspirations of returning to colonial rule under the British, French, and Dutch.

In India, the colonial administration tried to work out a solution for a peaceful transfer of power and a British exit. India's political elites tried the same. The Hindus favoured a one-state secular solution, while the Muslims feared Hindu dominance. Attempts were made to conceive a federal solution to guarantee Muslim security and control over own affairs within Muslim states embedded in a secular Indian federal union. But drawing the appropriate lines on the map to define a number of viable federal states for each of the two population segments proved impossible. They lived in a patchwork of interlacing communities of various scales across the Subcontinent. Meanwhile sectarian tensions escalated into violence. The British abandoned any ambition of an orderly power transition. In 1947 they left hastily amidst ethnic cleansing between Muslims and Hindus especially in Bengal and Punjab.

The result was a Muslim dominated Pakistan and a Hindu dominated India. Pakistan later fragmented along linguistic divisions with Bengali-speaking East Pakistan fighting a bloody war supported by India for independence from domination by Urdu-speaking West Pakistan. Out of that came Bangladesh in 1971, with a Muslim majority and a Hindu minority. All three states had declared themselves as secular, but later moved towards a de facto religious redefinition as either Muslim or Hindu. India and Pakistan have failed to agree on their common border resulting in a frozen conflict between the two nuclear armed countries, each regarding the other as an essential antagonist[2].

Cultural diversity within the Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire was another outcome of the waves of conquerors that had emanated from Central Asia. Turkic tribes had conquered and settled within the wider parts of West Asia and North Africa and had settled across Iran, Caucasus, and Anatolia where they established a number of shifting polities through time, including the Seljuk Empire (1037–1197) that at its height stretched across Afghanistan, Caucasus, Iran, Eastern Anatolia, and into the Levant. The Seljuks to a vast extent adopted and promoted Persian language and culture.

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[2] For two revealing and mutually complementing accounts of the partition of India and its consequences please see, Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition, The Making of India and Pakistan* (Yale University Press, 2017), and Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence, Voices from the Partition of India* (Duke University Press 2000).

In Western Anatolia another, much smaller Turkic polity evolved under its tribal chief, Osman I towards the end of the 13th century as a challenger to the dwindling Byzantine Empire, raiding and gradually conquering territories from it. With the collapse and fragmentation of the Seljuk Empire as a result of the Chinggisid invasions, the time was ripe for an accelerating expansion of the Western Anatolian Turkic tribal polity that was to become the Ottoman Empire. From the 14th century it expanded eastwards further into Anatolia and across the sea westwards into the Balkans, gradually taking over more territories from the Byzantine Empire encircling a shrinking core centred around Constantinople – its once mighty capital. The fact that the Byzantine capital survived well into the next century was mostly due to the setbacks and losses inflicted upon the Ottomans by the invasions of Timur Lenk. His Turko-Mongol armies swept across the Levant from 1399 to 1404, conquering and raiding Bagdad, Damascus, and Aleppo. Instead of continuing further South-West to confront the Mamluk empire, for which he would probably have needed naval support, Timur then turned North-West into Anatolia, where at the battle of Ankara in 1402 he destroyed an Ottoman army of 100.000 men and captured and killed Sultan Bayezid I of the rising Ottoman Empire (Abazov 2008: Map 25)

But already in 1404, Timur Lenk and his army turned their attention eastwards again in a push to re-establish Turko-Mongol rule over China. Timur died on the way in 1405. This was the last of the great Turko-Mongolian campaigns, after which their empire fell apart. This was due to changing circumstances, including the increasing volumes of transcontinental trade passing by sea instead of over land. Also, the new gunpowder based military technology took away the advantages of the horse-and-bow based high speed Turko-Mongolian warfare.

As the Mongol's abandoned the devastated Ottoman Empire, popular insurrection and wars of succession between Bayezid's sons created further havoc. Until 1413 the future of the Ottoman imperial project remained in the balance.

One aspect of those 11 years of turmoil is particularly illuminating for understanding empires and cultural diversity: in the aftermath of the battle of Ankara there was considerable unrest within the now destabilised empire confronted with rivalling Muslim principalities and the decaying but still active polities of the Bulgars, the Serbs and the Byzantines (Barkey 2008: 170). In that situation Şeyh Bedreddin stepped in (Terzioğlu 2012: 86–99). He was a widely travelled Sufi mystic also known for his roles as a learned political advisor and judge. Bedreddin was born in 1358/9 in Edirne (then capital of the Ottoman Empire) as the son of a Christian mother, and a Muslim father of Seljuk[3] descent belonging to the Gâzî (holy) warriors, who had conquered

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[3] Sufi mysticism held a strong position among the Seljuks, a position often explained with reference to its appeal to the pre-Islamic shamanic heritage of Turkic culture.

Rumelia (the Balkan provinces) from the Byzantines. Bedreddin was a product of a time with fluid borders between religions. His mixed family background, his travels and networks spanning from the Balkans to Cairo, and his openness to different religious and mystical traditions was further nurtured by his encounters with Sufism in Cairo and Safavid mysticism in Tabriz. Bedreddin was capable of connecting with people of all sorts of culture and religion across the empire. He was not only occupied with the connections between their different religions, but also genuinely concerned with their grievances stemming from poverty and shortage of land.

During the early conquests and expansions, it had served the Ottomans well to practice an inclusive, undogmatic, and open religious policy towards the different communities brought under their rule. Religious tolerance and willingness to find common ground helped their efforts to win 'hearts and minds' and strengthen the acceptance of Ottoman rule among the diverse populations recently brought under their Empire.

However, after their defeat in the battle of Ankara the Ottomans struggled to regain control. They were confronted with widespread popular unrest uniting impoverished Christians and Muslims. In that context Şeyh Bedreddin's syncretism combined with his social and political engagement became a toxic mixture for the Ottomans – threatening their reestablishment of control. They finally defeated the rebellion that Şeyh Bedreddin led against the Ottoman reordering of the Empire under a strict centralised control. Şeyh Bedreddin along with other leading figures together with a total of 6–8000 rebels were executed in 1416.

This rebellion became an important learning-experience for Ottoman rulers. What had happened was a unification of different ethno-religious groups in a common resistance to Ottoman rule. So, in order to prevent future insurrections from successfully uniting major parts of the population, a policy of fencing in and mainstreaming Islam was instigated. By nurturing the domination of a more orthodox Sunni Islam, and by bringing the Sufi orders under control, the Sultans strengthened both religious boundaries to the Christian communities, and, no less importantly, to the Safavids, who increasingly had made the messianic Twelver Shiism their mark of identity and legitimacy.

The Ottoman religious policy was not meant to alienate the Christian communities under their rule. It was about making sure that differences were sufficiently clear between Sunni Islam and Christianity to prevent any future syncretic alliance to mobilise a broad popular uprising against Ottoman rule, and it was about establishing Sunni as the dominant form of Islam within the empire, in contrast to the neighbouring Shia Safavid Empire.

Sunni Muslims formed a majority of 60% of the Ottoman population, even though in some provinces and places, such as Constantinople, their fraction of the total population was outnumbered by the combined numbers of other ethno-religious minorities. In other provinces Turkic speaking Sunnis were outnumbered by Arab or Kurdish speaking Sunnis (Paludan-Müller 2022: 414–45).

Thus, the demographic conditions of the Ottomans were different from those of the Moghuls. The Ottoman sultans on their side were mostly acting as guarantors for the rights and safety of various ethno-religious minorities, and also granting them considerable autonomy to regulate their own internal affairs including in some case tax-collection on behalf of the Sultan.

In contrast to the Mughal Empire, that of the Ottomans was also a great European power – for centuries part of a European constellation of five to six alternating dominant powers. The others included Spain (until the 18th century), Austria/the Danubian Monarchy, France, England/Britain, Sweden (for a shorter period), followed by Russia, and Prussia, followed by Germany.

The Ottoman Empire remained a major player in European politics well into the 19th century. It was, even if declining, part of a power equation that none of the other major players would allow their competitors to upset by taking advantage of the weakened Ottomans.

From the 18th century the Ottomans came under increasing pressure from the expanding Russian empire pushing South towards the Black Sea, that for centuries had been under de facto Ottoman control either directly or indirectly (through vassalage) along the entire coastline. Russia fought several wars against the Ottomans, and in 1829 the entire North-Eastern half of the coastline circumscribing the Black Sea between today's Turkey and today's Moldova had become part of the Russian Czarist Empire[4]. But other setbacks followed with gradual losses during the 18th century of Balkan provinces to the Habsburg Empire and in 1798 followed by a serious blow with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, one of the richest Ottoman provinces. Even though Napoleon's expedition failed due to the intervention of the English, Egypt never became fully reintegrated in the Ottoman Empire. Instead, in 1811 Muhammad Ali Pasha – a high-ranking Ottoman-Albanian officer – after a massacre on Egypt's Mamluk ruling class installed himself as Khedive (viceroy). From then on, he and his successors steered Egypt on an increasingly independent course from that of the imperial centre.

Even more fatal for the Ottomans was the spread of national independence movements in the empire's European provinces. Most prominently that of the Greeks beginning in the early 19th century and evoking a wave of sympathy and activist engagement from leading European artists and intellectuals, such as Byron, Hölderlin, and Madame de Stael. They read the Greek nationalist struggle into a narrative that construed contemporary Greeks as true heirs to Classical Greece, now emulating the Persian wars and the battle of Thermopylae (480 BCE) in a renewed heroic fight against 'oriental barbaric despotism' (Paludan-Müller 2022: 414–45). The Greeks, supported by France, Britain, and Russia gradually obtained full autonomy and also – through the wars of the 19th and early 20th century – still more territory.

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[4] See for instance, Martin Gilbert, The Routledge Atlas of Russian History. Oxon 2002: 46–47, and Claire Mouradian « Russes et Turcs, les meilleurs ennemis? (1), Des conflits de frontières aux guerres régionales: 19–31 dans Isabelle Facon (ed) *Russie-Turquie, Un défi à l'Occident* (Paris 2022): 20–23.

The lid of Pandora's box had sprung open, with independence movements growing among Christians in the Balkan provinces. That led to a steady territorial loss in the richest provinces, eroding the Empire's economic and political stability. It also changed the demographic balance within the Ottoman core lands of Anatolia, to which Muslim refugees both from the lost Balkan provinces and from a genocidal Russian expansion into Caucasus arrived in great numbers. So now the Muslim fraction of the population total rose from 60 to 70%, increasing land-shortage and tensions between different segments of the population.

In contrast to the Moghul Empire that was taken over by the British, the Ottoman Empire was never formally colonised. Yet it became increasingly economically dominated and thus quasi-colonised by its rivals, first and foremost by the British and the French, and later also by the Germans. With all three powers the Ottomans were at times allied against the Russians in a complex geopolitical game of shifting alliances.

The Ottomans were lacking behind other major powers, especially the three aforementioned that were leading the industrial transformation. This was a transformation that affected all aspects of the global power balance. Production of basic necessities, such as building materials, steel, textile, household-utensils, and food was transformed. So was transportation, communication, and military. That confronted the Ottomans with the risk of being outperformed by their competitors, and unable to defend their sovereignty unless implementing reforms at all levels to develop their economy, their organisation, and their military. So, amidst evolving confrontations with nationalist secessionists and a relentless Russian expansionist pressure the need for all-encompassing domestic reforms had to be met.

In order to do all of this at the same time, the Ottomans took up loans with French and British bankers. The Crimean War of 1853–56 incurred further debts upon the Ottomans, resulting in a state bankruptcy in 1875. In 1881 a so-called Ottoman Public Dept Administration was established to handle the debt. Through that, foreign creditors were given rights to control domestic taxes and use the revenue to pay back the credits.

The reforms within politics, administration, infrastructure, and military were in the long run insufficient to fend off the many challenges meeting the Ottomans from inside and outside. Some of the economic reforms imposed by foreign creditors undermined socio-economic balances by opening for imports of foreign mass-produced goods that outcompeted local handcrafted products and hence the livelihood of many people. Centralisation of tax collection removed the entire revenue from local economic circuits and priorities. On top of that, investments in infrastructure and economic development in the provinces were lost for the remaining empire whenever another province seceded.

Finally, political reforms to win over the Christian populations as loyal citizens took away special privileges from the Ottoman Muslims, adding to their frustration in seeing Christian and Jewish elite, due to better education and international networks, having more success within an increasingly complex internationalised economy, and within the specialised services required by a modernising state. So, Christians and Jews were overrepresented within the Ottoman elite, even though their majority, just like that of the Muslims, lived as unprivileged farmers and craftsmen.

Within those segments of the Ottoman population that received Western inspired education, there was a growing awareness of the need for more profound reforms if the course towards imperial collapse was to be turned. Among young officers and military doctors this developed into more organised political movements. They shared an aspiration for further modernisation to ensure the necessary capacity for the Ottoman Empire to again assert itself as a great power on par with its competitors on the European Continent. They also saw themselves as an avantgarde elite rooted in the military, with a mission to restrict or abolish the power of the Sultan. But there were two incompatible narratives for the future of the empire within the reform movement of 'The Young Turks' – the common label under which they became known. The oldest fraction, called the Ottomanists, wanted to transcend the ethnocultural division within the Empire and unite all segments in the political reform process as the only way to resist nationalist fragmentation and restore the empire to its former glory.

The competing narrative was that of the Turkists. For them, the idea of a common future for a state with a mixed population of Muslims and Christians had already been proven infeasible by decades of nationalist independence movements by Christian populations supported by foreign Christian powers. Therefore, in a Turkist perspective the future for a state based on what was now territories of the Ottoman Empire could only be secured by a Muslim population united by a Turkish culture (Kieser 2011: 126–48)

Meanwhile, tensions increased between the ethno-religious groups of the empire, including the many Muslim refugees (Muhacirs) exiled from the Balkans and the Caucasus. This further boosted the Turkist argument within the Young Turks.

At the outbreak of The First World War the Ottoman Empire joined the Central Powers hoping to reverse some of the previous territorial losses. But the war developed into disaster for the Ottomans. Early in the war the Ottoman leadership of Young Turks decided that a multiethnic state was no longer viable. In 1915 they began a genocidal campaign against the Armenian population of Eastern Anatolia – not the first, but the most fatal. Up to 1.5 million Armenians died and more were exiled. The war ended with total Ottoman defeat and a peace treaty splitting the spoils and even the Empire's Anatolian core between the powers on the winning side and various minorities, leaving only a rump state on the Black Sea coast and a narrow Mediterranean corridor for the Turks. That sparked off a revolutionary war of liberation that transformed the Empire into a republican Turkish nation state. It drove out the last Sultan, the foreign powers, and more Christians (first and foremost Greeks), culminating in an internationally brokered exchange of populations between Greece and the new Turkish Republic.

Apocalyptic metamorphosis: Empires into nations – diversity into division

In both the Moghul and the Ottoman Empires different ethnocultural segments of the population had lived in a patchwork of settlements, villages, urban quarters, streets, and houses. The segments were interlaced geographically, socially, and economically. Their cultures, even if distinct, shared many elements – including everyday culture like food, clothing, and music – learned from each other, or inherited from the same roots, except where religion imposed specific restrictions.

The Moghul and Ottoman Empires entered decline accompanied – and partly caused – by deteriorating relations between the ethno-cultural segments of their complex interlacing demographies. The strained relations could, in some cases, be seen as a primary cause contributing to imperial decline. It could be argued that this was the case with the rise of Greek nationalism in the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 19th century, even though foreign interference played a significant role, as in many of the ensuing nationalist struggles. But in most cases, the rise of intersectarian conflict originated in a context of economic hardship and growing competition between the segments for positions, property, and privilege. And then, as one ethno-cultural segment started to define itself in nationalist terms, that could trigger others to do the same. In India during the British Raj, Muslims felt increasingly disadvantaged as a minority within a Hindu-dominated imperial state. And in the Ottoman Empire, the elites of Christian and Jewish minorities were better positioned to operate in a new globalised economy with better education and foreign connections. Non-Muslims became obvious culprits in the eyes of a Muslim population feeling increasingly deprived. Even though the majority of Christians and Jews lived unenviable lives, their elites stood out as privileged and powerful, and suspiciously well-connected abroad to powers that were both seen as models for Ottoman modernisation and as threats to Ottoman survival.

So, by which means did the segments mark their identities as they turned nationalists, demanding independent statehood? The historic narrative is an important instrument for emphasising specific origins, spirituality, virtues, achievements, triumphs, rights, injustices, sufferings – and claims for retribution. Cultural expressions in art, architecture, music, literature, food, and everyday codes of conduct were manipulated to distinguish one's own group from the others. In the construction of nation states on the ruins of collapsed multi-ethnic empires, difference was essentialised into new narratives to underpin the legitimacy of an exclusive claim to territory and statehood by a group defining itself by religion, language, and history (that sometimes do not follow similar lines of division). In such a context there was little interest in looking for cultural elements that united people. A selective process of remembering and forgetting can make sure that what otherwise might look related across borders, becomes unrelated or alternatively described as something appropriated by the neighbours from 'our' cultural repertoire.

Material heritage has an obvious role in the construction and deconstruction of distinct ethno-national identities. The historic narrative works so much better when attached to place and physical elements, given the role as icons of 'our past' – as the narrative's symbolic representation and proof of veracity. This is why so much focus is on cultural heritage whenever one ethnocultural identity assesses itself against another.

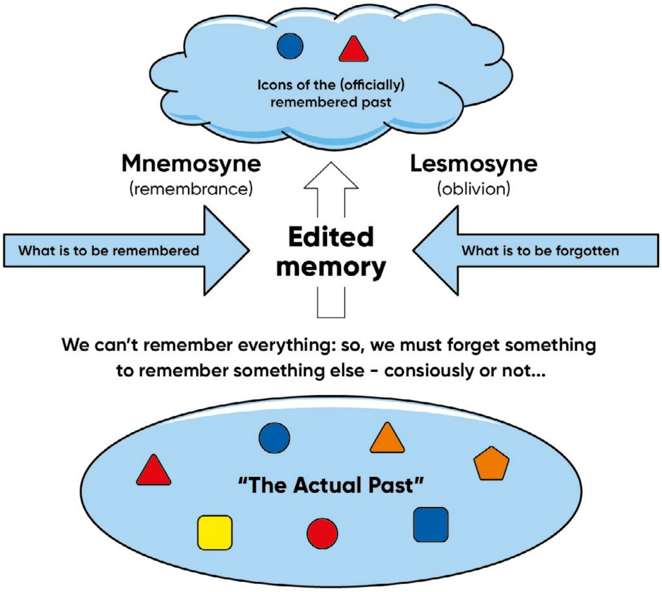
Icons of the (officially) remembered past
Mnemosyne
(remembrance)
Lesmosyne
(oblivion)
What is to be remembered
Edited memory
What is to be forgotten
We can't remember everything: so, we must forget something to remember something else - consiously or not...
"The Actual Past"

Fig 14.3 Forgetting is a Precondition for Remembering. We would be over whelmed by a chaos of unstructured information if we had to remember and to keep everything from our past. We would lose ability to find meaning and direction. This holds true at an individual as well as a social level. But problems come with manipulations by narrow interests of what shall be forgotten and what shall be remembered.

After the Armenian genocide and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and through the ethnic cleansing of Greeks and Syriacs, the Empire reconstituted itself as a Turkish nation state. Part of that process was a radical Turkification of the past: Armenian, Greek, and Syriac Christian heritage was sacked, repurposed, transformed, or simply left for quarrying and natural decay. Names referring to the recent presence of non-Turkish communities were changed. Furthermore, a systematic publishing of new local history books was initiated with the purpose of Turkifying the understanding of the past to legitimise the new Turkish nation state even on a local level. That included a still ongoing oppression of a distinct Kurdish identity.

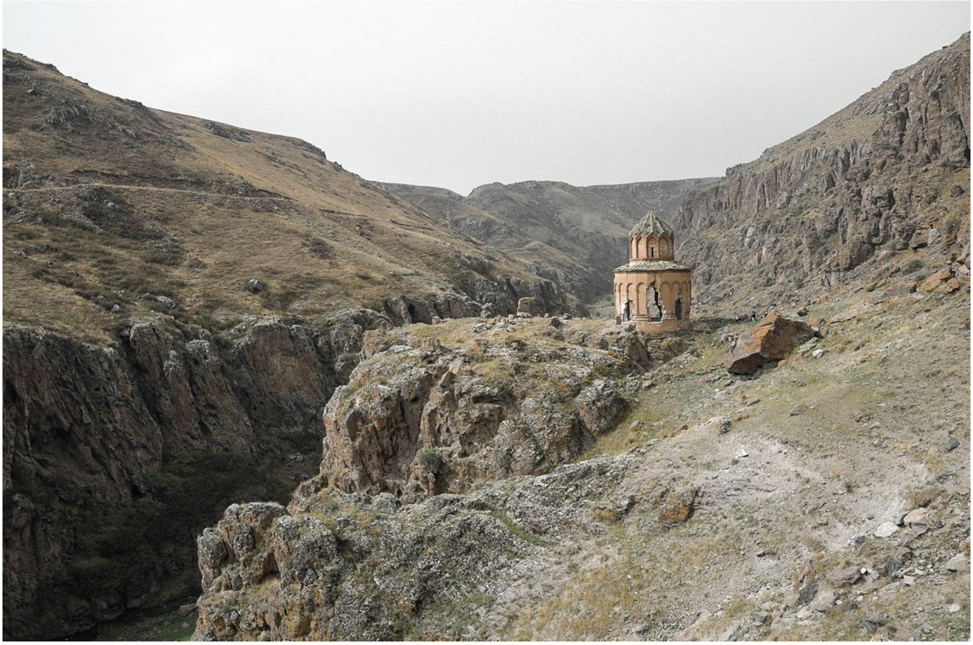

Fig 14.4 The Eradication of Turkey's Armenian Heritage. At the beginning of the 20th century the Armenian Monastery of Khtzkonk in Eastern Anatolia's Kars Province had 5 churches, only one of them, Surb Sargis (Saint Sergius) still stands, though heavily damaged by artillery rounds. Photo © Carsten Paludan-Müller 2013.

There is a recurring pattern of focus on religious monuments when conflict affects cultural heritage. Religion is often a prime marker of division along ethno-cultural lines.

A more recent example is the 1992 destruction of the Babri Masjid (Babur's Mosque). The Mosque, built in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh in 1528 on the orders of Babur, the first Mughal emperor. Hindu nationalists had campaigned for its removal for decades, when in 1992 the mosque was destroyed by a Hindu mob. Their claim was that a temple for Lord Ram (the seventh incarnation of Vishnu) on the same spot (supposedly his birthplace) had been demolished to give place for the construction of Babri Masjid. The destruction of the mosque was immediately retaliated to in Pakistan by Muslim mobs attacking and destroying Hindu temples. The story of Babri Masjid has had a long and politicised sequel involving two contested archaeological investigations by the central archaeological authority to establish the exact nature of the relationship between the construction of Babri Masjid in 1528 and the remains of earlier Hindu structures and objects found below (Payot 2010: 106–10). In 2019 the Supreme Court of India concluded the case by allowing the construction of a new Hindu temple at the site. In August 2020, the foundation stone of the new Hindu temple was laid by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). In January 2024, the Prime Minister led the religious ceremony to inaugurate the still uncompleted temple – in due time to boost his support for upcoming spring elections. Modi and BJP have long campaigned against India's 200 million remaining Muslims, and against the secular ideals hailed as the Indian federation was founded in 1947 (Butalia 2000: 6–7; 244–5; 275–6). New narratives of India's past are promoted by the BJP government to emphasise its Hindu legacy, and to demote the Indo-Persian legacy and the hybridity, richness, and diversity that characterises Indian culture past and present. In 2024 the violence against Muslims seems to escalate including the bulldozing of their secular as well as religious buildings (Amnesty International 2024). But fundamental conflict during the Moghul empire between Hindu's and Muslims is not evidenced in historic Sanskrit narratives (Truschke 2021). Rather it is a product of modern nationalist essentialism and retro-projection, tearing India's diverse cultural fabric apart by turning diversity into division (Maizland 2024).

In Turkey, July 2020 Istanbul's Hagia Sophia, Justinian's 6th century Byzantine Cathedral, was reconverted as a mosque, by which President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan overturned Kemal Atatürk's 1935 secularisation of the building, after it had served as a mosque since Sultan Mehmet II's conquest of Constantinopolis in 1453. Like Modi, Erdoğan led the religious ceremony – a Friday prayer – that inaugurated the return of the building to its status as a symbol of the Ottoman conquest. That symbolic meaning was emphasised by the Minister of religious affairs mounting the minbar (pulpit) to read the sermon with a sword in his hand as a reference to the so called 'right of the sword'. The reconversion was perceived as an affront to Christian minorities in general and to the Greeks in Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus. But the rationale behind this was to rally domestic nationalist and Islamist support (The Indian Express 2020).

Probably the most contested religious site is Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque. For Muslims Al-Aqsa is the third most sacred site. Built on The Temple Mound over the rock from which Mohammad is said to have ascended to heaven upon his death. For the Jews, this is the most sacred place, where Solomon's temple once stood, and later that of Herodes until the Romans in 70 C.E. sacked Jerusalem and drove the Jews into exile. In the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians the Temple Mound is symbolically overcharged.

Israeli archaeologists are tunnelling and excavating under East-Jerusalem and the temple mound in order to retrieve more elements to selectively emphasise Jewish aspects of Jerusalem's diverse history. These activities have been widely criticised also for causing structural damage to buildings and monuments above ground (Payot 2010: 98–101; 125–31).

In 2023 UNESCO's World Heritage Committee, at its 45th session, adopted a decision regarding the protection of Historic Jerusalem and its walls, regretting the continued illegal Israeli excavations and tunnelling and Israel's refusal to allow access for UNESCO to monitor the activities (UNESCO 2024a). Like right wing Hindu fundamentalists demanded and finally executed the destruction of Babri Masjid, right wing Jewish fundamentalists have demanded the removal of Al-Aqsa to give place for the building of a third temple.

The entire 'memoryscape' of Israel/Palestine is highly politicised, as exposed in several analyses focusing on Israeli instrumentalization of heritage and archaeology, but also on resistance both by Israeli and Palestinian activists and archaeologists (See, for instance, Benvenisti 2000; de Cesari 2019; Makdisi 2022; Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022).

In Nagorno Karabakh, Azerbaijan is changing the historic fabric of what for more than a thousand years was a territory with an Armenian majority population. That ended with the ethnic cleansing of the Armenians from the enclave in 2022. Azerbaijan has long denied the veracity of the historic Armenian presence. It removed medieval epigraphy and architectural elements from Medieval Armenian churches and monasteries, claiming 'that they just removed, unauthentic elements that the Armenians had added to falsify the true historic origin and function of those monuments.' According to Azerbaijan's alternative narrative, the Armenian churches and monasteries were originally built by so called Caucasian Albanians from whom the current Udi minority in Azerbaijan supposedly has descended[5]. (Agha 2021).

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[5] See for instance, Agha, J. 2021. Perspectives: Who were the Caucasian Albanians? Eurasianet

In pursuit of diversity – beyond division

As this is written history and heritage are being instrumentalised in wars in Ukraine and in Israel-Palestine. Amidst the dust and blur it is difficult to take stock of the specifics of the destructions.

But the existence of a Ukrainian identity legitimising independent statehood distinct from Russia's is rejected by Moscow (Black 2024). This is marked by Russian theft from museums, and destruction of heritage sites in Ukraine (UNESCO 2024b). As part of its struggle to uphold sovereignty Ukraine is defining itself and its culture as essentially different from the Russian. Ukraine marks its 'otherness' by celebrating the specifics of its culture and history, and by removing statues of Catherina the Great, and changing street-names referring to Russian writers, such as Pushkin.

The war in Gaza has further raised awareness of the crucial symbolic role of cultural heritage in the ongoing conflict between a Palestinian and a Jewish vision for this embattled strip of land 'between the river and the sea'. The many elements of Palestinian heritage from villages abandoned during the ethnic cleansing in 1948 are beginning to catch wider attention as a testimony to the Nakba – the Palestinian tragedy that accompanied the Jewish nation-building. The selective promotion of Jewish heritage and 'biblical archaeology' is now more widely questioned. And with the embittered prolonging of the conflict one must dread the prospects of ever finding a political solution able to embrace the true historic complexity of this land that for thousands of years was part of successive multicultural empires.

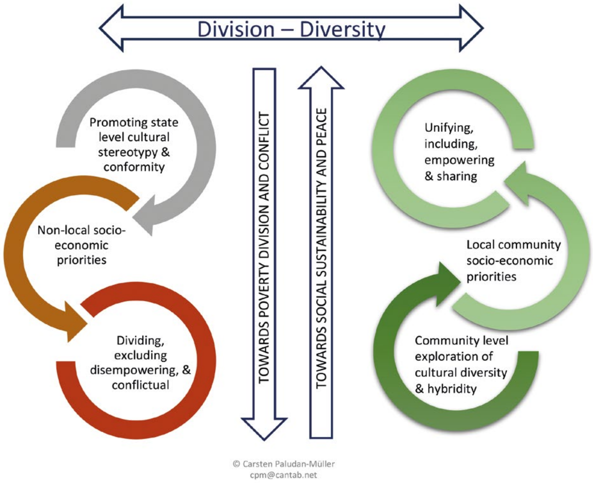
In an extreme situation like Ukraine's fight for sovereignty, there is little room for discursive nuances and exploration of shared elements of Ukrainian and Russian culture. In a situation of state-nation building the narrational effort is concentrated on demonstrating the incompatibility of one's identity with that of 'the other'. There will typically be a pressure on toning down local diversities, and on uniting behind a stereotyped and unmistakeable national identity. Another example of that mechanism can be found in Cyprus, where Cypriot identity has been subordinated into a Greek-Turkish dichotomy, dictated by the logics of the long-term regional conflict between Ankara and Athens. That logic has further complicated the life of the island's Aramaic speaking Maronites, who for a long time remained unrecognised as a minority, incompatible as it is with the binary logics of the major conflict.

Can we transcend the stereotyped identity constructions conceived in the context of nation building? And can cultural heritage be part of that?

Four points are important for the answer:

1. Once conflict erupts, positioning people against people, there is little room for exploring shared cultural elements. The often derogatory or even dehumanising rhetoric prevalent in the characterisation of 'the other' illustrates some of the obstacles.

2. Another obstacle is the stereotyping of cultures as part of nationalist discourse. By casting the culture of a nation in terms of a homogenous repertoire of ‘typical’ elements, that defines ‘us’ as different from ‘them’, cultural hybridity remains outside of our collective awareness. All of those cultural elements that we share across physical and mental borders are resources for our ability to reach out to each other across political boundaries to explore what we have in common.
3. One way of transcending the limits of a simplifying nationalist definition of culture is to move from the national to the local level. Local communities have particular mixes of culture that, besides elements from the national repertoire, have others that reflect a particular history, economy, ethnic composition, and relations beyond the national borders. Working with local communities to explore diversities and hybridities embedded within their heritage and family histories can open to new and more concrete insights into relations reaching far beyond borders and essentialist stereotypes about us and the others.
4. War-torn communities need more than peace. They also need socio-economic recovery. Cultural heritage should be seen as a resource for that. The rebuilding of landmarks important to the local community can provide jobs and income from restoration, maintenance, and service. Tourism anchored in local community interests can be part of that and further stimulate a healing sense of shared interest and pride. That, in itself, may help to prevent the next war.



Division – Diversity
Promoting state level cultural stereotypy & conformity
Non-local socio-economic priorities
Dividing, excluding disempowering, & conflictual
TOWARDS POVERTY DIVISION AND CONFLICT
TOWARDS SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND PEACE
Unifying, including, empowering & sharing
Local community socio-economic priorities
Community level exploration of cultural diversity & hybridity

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Fig 14.5
Cultural Heritage can be used either to incite Division – or to acknowledge Diversity. It depends on our choices and priorities. It is essential to focus on the local communities. Outside involvement must focus on facilitation, inclusion, representation, socio-economic sustainability, and empowerment.

For those who work as professionals within cultural heritage a valid role could be that of the enabler. To help local communities engage and explore diversities and hybridities embedded in their buildings, their clothing, their food, their language, and the stories of their families. We need not deny the existence of national culture, but to complement it with a necessary understanding of what our cultures share with other cultures. This is not an undertaking easily pursued during times of war. But it is something to prepare during war as part of a peacebuilding effort, to be launched once arms are brought to silence, in order to prevent the next war.

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Biography

Carsten Paludan-Müller is associated with the Cambridge Heritage Research Centre. He is an archaeologist (PhD from the University of Copenhagen). He has held leading positions within museums, national heritage administration, and research institutions in Denmark and Norway. He is widely engaged within national and international organisations. His interests and research are within cultural heritage in the context of geopolitics, conflict and peace. Further details here: https://www.heritage.arch.cam.ac.uk/people/c.paludan-muller

15. The Role of Heritage Reconstruction in the Rebuilding of Society After Violent Conflict

Marie Louise Stig Sørensen

Keywords Reconstruction; Trauma; Recovery; Reconciliation; Authenticity

Abstract This paper reflects on the core assumptions, common aims, and some of the implications of post-conflict cultural heritage reconstruction in the present. For more than a hundred years, townscapes, religious buildings, important sites, and other forms of heritage have been reconstructed as a deliberate means of overcoming the impacts of conflict, moving forward and erasing, or maintaining, memories of atrocities (at least in their physical forms). This has been a costly enterprise, and the outcomes have not consistently been as hoped for, especially in terms of impact on social cohesion and the ability to reconstruct social identities and notions of belonging.

This paper points to the emerging concern about the right forms of reconstruction, and if such a notion is valid! It identifies concerns about scale, time, and material forms. It identifies an increased focus on reconstruction beyond the material as community and 'identity' have become seminal aspects of the interwoven reasons for heritage reconstruction, and yet there are still substantial challenges about why, for whom, and how we reconstruct, and how we understand the impact and consequences for diverse communities.

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Introducing the topic

The repeated occurrences of violent destruction of peoples' lives and environments constitute fundamental existential challenges historically as well as now and make high demands on resources. How such destroyed societies should be reconstructed, and what aims and aspirations should be invested in their recovery, have become concerns shared at many levels from the World Bank to local communities. After destruction action is needed, it is not optional. But the action decided can vary widely depending on complex interconnected factors and ranges from a place being abandoned never to be returned to again to very accurate reconstructions of the fabric of the destroyed place. Heritage is often a core factor in such reconstruction efforts as notions of the past, in the form of 'how we used to be', affect aspirations for recovery, with the reconstructed heritage used to compensate for various kinds of losses. This means that heritage and processes of heritagisation are often closely involved with how societies formulate their wishes and visions for their post-conflict existence and how they enact them.[1]

While this connection between past, present, and future has a long history, it has been thrown into sharp light by the recovery processes following various late 20th and early 21st centuries conflicts. In turn, ever more detailed accounts have accumulated and can now be used to try to identify the core issues involved and some of the substantial challenges encountered. Such insights emerge both from the scrutiny of heritage-induced aspirations about what we aim to do and from examples of actual practical responses.

Reconstruction and the role of heritage

The Cambridge Dictionary defines reconstruction as 'the process of building or creating something again that has been damaged or destroyed'.[2] (my emphasis). The *Re* in reconstruction makes this temporal connection clear, stressing that such efforts entail a degree of remaking or recovering something that used to exist, either because that something is necessary or it is desirable. Heritage, as the presence and valorisation of the past in the present, is, therefore, a significant factor in *Re*construction. This, moreover, involves heritage both as an object and as a value. Heritage as an object of reconstruction refers to the things (usually a monument or a building but it can also be a town or landscape) that are materially recovered or remade. The object of reconstruction can, however, also be intangible aspects of heritage, like when the aim is to reconstitute customary practices or sentiments of place. Value is also involved. This is because the rationale behind reconstructions is based on a notion of value – as the sentiments and valorisation attached to ideas about how things used to be and to be recovered from things in which the past is 'present'. Moreover, additional value is created through the destruction in itself as well as the efforts of heritage recovery; reconstruction creates a new heritage and adds new layers of value. Reconstructions are meaning-making socio-political practices.

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[1] This paper is based on extensive comparative research of different post-conflict societies in Europe over the last 200 years conducted 2008–12 by the CRIC project funded by the EU.

[2] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/reconstruction#google_vignette (accessed 17 May.2024)

Reconstructions are, therefore, processes of heritagisation during which heritage shifts from primarily being a lived quality (as in living with and performing heritage) to becoming a new object granted external recognition. One may say that through the selection for reconstruction, the heritage of concern becomes reified as *the heritage.* Moreover, such reconstructed elements effortlessly gain a different, at times even greater, importance than they had before their reconstruction as they are assigned new roles such as becoming evidence (of time, of recovery, etc.) and witnesses (of history, destruction, and deliberate harm). It would, therefore, be helpful to recognise that heritage reconstruction is an essentially artificial exercise of selection and that it imposes on the present by insisting on the presence of former forms, the resurrection of the destroyed. These reconstructions may thus be seen as contrasting to both normative organic or sporadic developments and future-oriented enterprises, with the latter's promise of a clean-slate approach. Heritage and heritagisation bring values and meanings into the present but in so doing they also allow the past to drag on or burden the present. An enormously important challenge for heritage reconstruction after conflict is, therefore, whether and how the aspirations behind such activities can be future oriented rather than being caught in a stagnated sense of what society was before the conflict.

In our analyses, we should not, however, mistake the desire for reconstruction as merely about recovering old and pretty elements to be added to our new version of a place. One of the core reasons why heritage is granted importance in these processes is the very strong link commonly forged between heritage and notions of self and the distinctiveness of being a community. This is an intangible dimension of heritage that vastly informs its potential roles after conflict. Conflict affects existential notions of security. It disturbs peoples' sense of belonging, both in place and through their relationships with others. Post-conflict societal reconstructions aim to undo or overcome such harm and to recover stability including civic and psychological notions of identity, belonging, home, and placeness. Working towards regaining a sense of self - at all levels from the individual, communities, and state – is essential to a successful response to destruction. Without such intimate connections to heritage (in different forms), recovery risks producing new places that are empty shells void of the layers of meanings and associations needed for coherent and connected social identities to be forged. In response, heritage reconstruction has become a key player in projects that aim at the rebuilding of societies and communities after conflict. However, these efforts do not always result in positive outcomes in terms of, for example, recreating a sense of belonging or people feeling justly treated. This, in turn, raises questions about what are effective reconstructions.

Reconstruction – from a lie to an existential truth

It is important to understand that the reconstruction of heritage is neither a new nor a simple practice. Depending on the definitions of both heritage and reconstruction, there are substantial historical precedents, much debate, and changing trends. The official attitudes prevalent until recently were broadly based on nineteenth-century Western historicism that departed from earlier principles of conservation as they granted special significance to the historical quality of monuments (Jokilehto 1999). Behind these sentiments were reactions to the experience of rapidly changing landscapes due to industrialisation and the consequential romanticisation of the world that was disappearing. The conservation movement that this gave birth to stood for conservation and preservation as a matter of *status quo* and was against changes to the historic fabric. They promulgated a kind of essentialism of heritage which rejected notions of change or alterations, a fetishism of heritage in itself, with heritage seen as the emblem of history.

This is probably most strongly expressed by John Ruskin (1819–1900), one of the fathers of modern conservation and heritage management philosophy, who welcomed the traces of time on buildings seeing them as part of a building's historical essence. He famously stated that 'it is in that golden stain of time, that we are to look for the real light, and colour, and preciousness of architecture' (Ruskin 1849: 8.234). About restoration, he scathingly wrote: 'Do not let us talk then of restoration. The thing is a Lie from beginning to end.' (ibid. 8.244). This principle of no interference was until recently the dominant restoration and reconstruction philosophy (e.g. Cameron 2017). It informed the authenticity concept that underwrote the early versions of the World Heritage Convention, the restoration doctrine behind the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and the 1964 International Charter on the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (the Venice Charter). For such organisations, reconstruction was only justifiable in exceptional circumstances. In these approaches, restoration was done for the sake of heritage without any reflection on or acknowledgement of other societal needs. It is with regard to such attitudes that substantial changes can be seen over recent decades. The Second World

War resulted in vast areas of destroyed town- and landscapes and was followed by extensive and intensive reconstruction projects. These projects varied in what they saw as their core purpose and how various social needs were balanced against the needs of the heritage *per se* as well as wishes for economic development. From these projects, it has become clear that the scale and timing of reconstruction within the cycle of destruction and recovery matters. If one, for instance, compares the rebuilding of the destroyed Warsaw with that of Dresden there are several lessons to learn. Firstly, however, it should be noted that each of these projects was politically motivated and influenced by ideological positions about the (competitive) rebuilding of Europe. Secondly, there are many claims about what motivated these reconstruction projects and how they were carried out that are not supported by evidence. These points in themselves provide important lessons – reconstruction is always part of political and ideological positionings in the present.

Both cities saw substantial destruction (an estimate of 84% and 74% respectively of the historic centre of Warsaw and Dresden), but the former was rebuilt quickly and with great loyalty towards the previous town, its building style and layout, whereas the latter was a prolonged project that involved different restoration phases.

The reconstruction of the historic centre of Warsaw took about five years resulting in a remade Warsaw that looked and functioned similarly to the previous city (although generally presented as improved). UNESCO characterises this as ‘a five-year reconstruction campaign by its citizens resulting in today's meticulous restoration of the Old Town, with its churches, palaces and market-place. It is an outstanding example of a near-total reconstruction of a span of history covering the 13th to the 20th century’.[3] However, over the last decade, archival research has increasingly challenged this simple narrative of a citizens’ project and revealed it as a largely centralised exercise under the aegis of the Soviet-controlled communist government (e.g. Gliński 2021; Kuznicki 2013). At the end of the war, it was not clear what should happen to the destroyed city, as was also the case for hundreds of other cities. Various plans, including proposals for total abandonment or turning it into a kind of war memorial, were put forward. However, it seems that the decisive factor was that Joseph Stalin wanted a prestige project. People had begun to return to Warsaw in huge numbers, and they started informal clearance of the ruins and repairing buildings, but Stalin needed international recognition (Gliński 2021), and a restored Warsaw could provide this. On February 3rd February 1945, the National Council passed a resolution that called for Warsaw's reconstruction with the Biuro Odbudowy Stolicy (Office for the Reconstruction of the Capital) formed on February 14th. The office employed 1,500 people including architects, lawyers, and journalists, with the funding largely raised through public contributions (Gliński 2021). From its outset, the reconstruction of Warsaw aimed to be distinct. The aim was 'total reconstruction', an approach that contrasted with the targeted reconstruction exercised by other European countries. However, even within this attitude of total reconstruction, not all elements within the old town were selected for reconstruction. In particular,

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[3] https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/30/#:~:text=After%20the%20war%2C%20a%20five,13th%20to%20the%2020th%20century. (accessed 28 May 2024)

> *'Emphasis was on the earliest traceable form of the merchants' houses, convents, and churches crowded in to this compact district, which allowed conservators and architects to forget many of the awkward mongrel details and shabby outhouses that had filled court-yards .... Equally, historic ornaments, which had long disappeared from the façades of these buildings, were restored.' (Crowley 2014: 214)*

David Crowley further points to how the function of the restored city was didactic, through its many dedications and symbols decorating house facades it became a place for the display of an orthodox Marxist view of history (Crowley 2014: 215). After Stalin's death, the wider building projects became increasingly shaped by Soviet architectural ideals, but the reconstructed core provided a strong sense of a familiar townscape, and critique appears to have been muted.

The reconstruction of the historic centre of Dresden followed a very different trajectory (Rehberg and Neutzner 2015). During the immediate post-war period with the development of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the response to the ruined city was somewhat chaotic. Many ruins were demolished, a few buildings were restored, but gradually the municipality pushed for the construction of a new 'face' for the city in the form of mostly Soviet modernism. This not only effaced the former city in terms of its appearance, including its 'feel' and atmosphere, but it also ignored traditional street patterns, so also interfered with how the centre could function. The changes did not, however, affect the entirety of the historic centre with many areas remaining uncleared and with the ruin of the Frauenkirche in the Neumarkt acting as an unofficial memorial. A new phase began in the 1970s with restoration increasingly replacing demolition. After the reunification with West Germany in 1990 reconstruction gained new momentum, partly driven by interests from outside the former GDR. The showcase was the resurrection of the Frauenkirche, which added a strong focal point to the baroque character of the resurrected historic centre, but one that could be seen as a cliché (Rehberg and Neutzner 2015).

These different phases and the changing ideological influences that affected the rebuilding of Dresden have resulted in considerable disagreements and dissent, often expressed in a sense of loss or rejection of sanitised encounters. Moreover, in this case, such discontent, or downright critical rejection, was expressed in response to both of the major rebuilding phases. First, it was a reaction against the loss of the historical sense of the town but in the subsequent phase, there was much critical rejection of the 'false' historicisation of the town and the erasure of the GDR period townscape. Both phases caused a sense of alienation for many of the inhabitants as their familiar townscape was altered. The architectural historian Maxi Schreiber has, for instance, argued that 'After Reunification, planners sought to create the effect of a Canaletto painting from around 1750 through a bizarre mix of complete reconstructions of historical buildings, reconstructed historical facades grafted onto new buildings, and genuinely contemporary buildings.' He further stated 'This ensemble feigns a homogenous baroque landscape that ignores the urban development of the past three hundred years and treats newer buildings like the Kulturpalast as intruders.' In contrast to Warsaw, the rebuilding of Dresden introduced Soviet-period building and city planning throughout the city, not just in some neighbourhoods, and for many this became the city they grew up with. The discussion surrounding the fate of the Kulturpalast (Cultural Palace) is, therefore, very revealing of the complex ways people connect with their built environment. Contrary to the fate of similar cultural palaces in many other cities of the former GDR (such as in Berlin) after much public debate it was decided (in 2017) to renovate the building rather than demolish or transform it (Schreiber 2024) – probably mainly because for many it had become part of their town's identity and their personal memories.

Recent changes in approaches to reconstruction

Based on experiences gained during the second half of the 20th century, official reasons for reconstruction – philosophical as well as political – have changed considerably over recent decades. This is illustrated by UNESCO's change in attitude from its former rejection of reconstruction (as that was seen to compromise the authenticity of heritage) to strong involvement in reconstruction efforts, such as in Syria (for example the case of Aleppo). Beyond the continued interest in architectural heritage, the involvement of UNESCO (and similar international bodies) has increasingly become shaped around not just intangible heritage but also ephemeral socio-psychological elements like the recovery of the spirit of communities and the value of a place.

Christina Cameron hinted at the reasons for this change when in 2017, in a UNESCO-sponsored pre-conference article, she stated that as the 'world's cultural heritage has suffered heavier losses in recent years. This has led to a more favourable attitude by the World Heritage Committee and UNESCO towards the reconstruction of damaged or destroyed sites.' (Cameron 2017). One of the early but not entirely successful examples of this change was the Old Bridge Area in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, listed as a World Heritage Site in 2005. Since this was a reconstructed site (deliberately destroyed by the Croat military as an act of aggression against the Bosniaks in 1993, and reconstructed 2001–2004 with funding from the World Bank, for details see Sørensen 2020), the nomination had to explain why this could be a World Heritage Site. This was justified based on the restoration of cultural value, which in turn was presented as an intangible dimension of the property. This, however, shows the continuation of a limited architectural appreciation of what was involved in the intangible value of the bridge. Various decisions made during the reconstruction, such as the use of craftspeople from Turkey and the unequal involvement of the two local communities (Croats and Bosniaks), mean that it emerged as a conflicted and divisive heritage rather than aiding the desired reconciliation between the affected communities (Makaš 2021; Wollentz 2019).

The increased destructive targeting of heritage sites no doubt has pulled attention towards the present, but the change in direction is probably also deeply influenced by wider societal agendas leading to concerns with the recovery and healing of communities rather than merely the fabric.

It is, therefore, important to recognise and scrutinise how reconstruction due to conflict adds several distinct challenges and complexities. The destruction of heritage during conflict has a long history as tangible heritage, such as monuments and buildings, has consistently been collateral damage of warfare. But deliberate destruction of heritage is also a well-known form of aggression and a potent tool in attempts to obliterate another group and its claims of identity, belonging, and legitimacy. Such deliberate attacks on heritage appear to have become ever more prevalent at the same time as more legal protection is offered for heritage during conflict (Viejo-Rose 2020, 2022). This has led to a growing field of research investigating the relationships between heritage and violent conflicts and their aftermaths (e.g. Bevan 2016; Clack and Dunkley 2022; papers in Sørensen and Viejo-Rose 2015, and the 'Palgrave Studies in Cultural Heritage and Conflict' book series). Over recent decades this research has been fuelled by attempts to reach more critical insights into iconic events, such as the above-mentioned destruction/reconstruction of the Mostar Bridge in 1993/2001-2004 (Makaš 2021), the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in 2001 (Nagaoka 2020; Sørensen 2020), and the vast destruction of heritage sites during the recent wars in the Middle East, including the iconoclasm of ISIS/Daesh (e.g. Cunliffe and Curini 2018; Harmanşah 2015). The widespread deliberate heritage destruction during the Bosnian War has also been extensively analysed aiding general insights (e.g. papers in Bădescu et al. 2021). Hoping to learn how to de-escalate the part of a conflict that leads to such destruction and to deal with their impacts, the motivations and the short-to-medium-term impacts on local communities have become core research topics (Viejo-Rose 2022).

Such studies reveal new developments and ever more complex scenarios. One noteworthy observation is the exploitation of world media in the wide sharing and 'advertisement' of the destruction of cultural heritage. It has been argued that we have seen the emergence of heritage destruction as a media event (Harmanşah 2015;

Sørensen 2020: 178–79) and that in turn reconstruction risks transitioning into a counter-act. This is clearly illustrated by the example of the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha and UNESCO's involvement in discussions of the reconstruction of the ruins (see papers in Nagaoka 2020). Arguably, there is also a wide-ranging general awareness of the explicit connection between violent conflict, heritage, and post-conflict reconstruction, revealed by the use of formerly unfamiliar terms and new phraseologies in common speech. For instance, the term 'cultural genocide' has recently become widely used again after almost disappearing from common speech. The term was defined in 1944 by the Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin (in the book that coined the term genocide), and it describes the deliberate and systematic destruction of a culture in the form of tradition, values, language, and other elements (Novic 2016). Similarly, the phrase 'weaponisation of heritage' to refer to the deliberate and targeted use of heritage to harm others is now also used widely. Such additions to common conversations indicate how widespread awareness of the plight of heritage during and after conflicts has become.

The widespread expectations about reconstruction are also revealing of general attitudes. Before a conflict is over, various bodies already begin discussing heritage reconstruction. This has, for instance, been the case for the war in Ukraine with various international organisations having lined up plans for heritage rescue. The World Monument Fund, for instance, has appointed a Ukrainian heritage crisis specialist and has already included a Ukrainian heritage site in its 2024 rescue projects. The site, the so-called Teacher's House in Kyiv, is presented as having 'notable structures such as its elegant frieze and large glass dome, the historic building has become an iconic element of the Kyiv skyline and a major *national symbol'* (my emphasis).[4] I emphasised 'national symbol' as a reminder of how such projects at various levels are always part of contemporary politics. Similarly, UNESCO has produced several assessment reports on the impact of the war on Ukraine's culture and tourism sector, including a section on 'Paving the way for reconstruction.'[5] Organisations, such as the World Monuments Fund, operate with a concept of early involvement, or first-stage response. The attention given to reconstruction as a very early intervention after conflict (or during it) rather than a concern for later stages of recovery is a relatively

[4] https://news.artnet.com/art-world/world-monuments-fund-2024-projects-2419826#:~:text=Art%20World-,The%20World%20Monuments%20Fund's%202024%20Projects%20Will%20Preserve%20Cultural%20Heritage,from%20devastating%20earthquakes%20in%20Turkey. (accessed 23 May 2024)

[5] https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/ukraine-unesco-estimates-damage-culture-and-tourism-after-2-years-war-35-billion#:~:text=UNESCO%20has%20raised%20USD%20%2466%20Million%20to%20alleviate%20the%20emergency&text=Japan%20alone%20has%20supported%20the,heritage%2C%20education%20and%20the%20media. (accessed 23 May 2024)

recent development resulting from the increased recognition that heritage reconstruction (broadly defined) is not a luxury but a necessity for societal recovery. It reflects a change in the understanding of what reconstruction is about with the reasons having moved from a focus on fabric and architectural authenticity to growing concerns with trauma, including intergenerational trauma, and how heritage reconstruction can be one of the tools used to move forward.

This has influenced how post-conflict recovery is being talked about, both by academics and the various bodies involved in planning recovery. This includes a growing recognition of trauma and associated issues of trust and safety. Here evidence collected after the Balkan war has, for example, been important for showing that trust (in the future and political promises, so an environment of trust) was greatly enhanced if the destroyed religious buildings (mosques and churches) were restored. Such rebuilding was emotionally felt to be a political commitment to guaranteeing the future of the affected religious/ethnic groups.

Another pertinent topic is the importance of a sense of place, of the recovery of the familiar and recognisable 'home', as illustrated by the case of the rebuilt Dresden discussed above. Recognising the rootedness of identity in heritage, as place and performance, is, therefore, important if reconstruction aims at societal recovery. This means that although a degree of change can be carried out, such as improvement of sanitation, if the connection to the past is severed and not remade then communities struggle to recover; they lack the memory of place as a means of anchoring themselves. This challenge has become widely recognised, and the literature on post-conflict reconstruction provides case studies of changes that have altered a place beyond the psychological and financial capacity of those who used to be local residents, thus undermining their ability to rebuild their lives there. The rebuilt Beirut is an example of this. During post-conflict, the destruction of places has often been used as an opportunity to clean up and induce new economic potentials to a place, such as tourism or industries, but such changes come at great social costs in terms of disenfranchised communities. However, beyond the push from economic enterprises, not engaging with highly demanding reconstructions can also simply be a point of expediency or result from a lack of resources. Reconstructions are demanding.

The challenges that have to be encountered as the focus changes from fabric to people are considerable, and it is difficult to navigate them surefooted. The architectural historian Mark Jarzombek captures this when he states that 'Rebuilding after a tragedy is not just about finding money and designing a plan. It's working through trauma and the memory of the tragedy that haunts places.'[6] He further suggests that 'to make peace with the trauma and respectfully engage with the terrible things that have happened in the local communities' the local people themselves need to be involved and this should be understood as a long-term process. As attention has shifted from fabric to people and the coherence and well-being of communities, it is becoming clear that local communities need to be involved and that reconstruction may go through different phases as it is played out over different times. But post-conflict scenarios often add additional layers to these factors. The rebuilding of society is, for example, often linked to rhetoric of reconciliation and healing or, on the contrary, about settling scores and creating revenge-building. The presence within post-conflict societies of notions of victims and perpetrators, of the innocent and the evil, brings the past into the future in an often deeply counterproductive way. Moreover, notions of partisanship are not just allocated to those who were directly involved in a conflict but are also commonly attached to the various agents who become involved in recovery projects.

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[6] https://birdinflight.com/en/architectura-2/20221214-postwar-dresden.html (accessed 25 May 2024)

Post-conflict: the challenges of reconstruction

The weaponisation of heritage and the increased public awareness of its destruction coupled with the impacts on actual physical sites and townscapes have caused official bodies, national as well as international ones, to become increasingly aware of the challenges of reconstruction. In turn, management and action plans for heritage protection during conflict and reconstruction post-conflict have been developed and case examples created (Viejo-Rose 2022). Through these endeavours, some of the core challenges that will always be involved are becoming clearer, including, of course, divergent views about whether specific reconstruction cases have met the desired effects and can be considered successful.

Clearly, reconstruction after conflict is affected by a range of extreme challenges, including the scale of action needed, complexities of timing, the demands on a range of resources, opposing claims on the heritage itself, competing needs (such as basic health versus rebuilding iconic heritage), tensions between different values (often expressed along social axes, such as generations or social divides), and the challenges of recognising and locating immaterial values. The tendency of reconstruction to focus on medium-term action and tangible iconic heritage forms is, therefore, very understandable. Narrowly focussed top-down reconstruction projects do, however, frequently come with subsequent problems and often do not act as originally envisaged. Failure includes adding fuel to tensions, disenfranchised local communities, adding to emotional stress, and creating dysfunctional public spaces.

If a core motivation for the reconstruction of the built environment is to help communities to overcome the destruction of their world rather than primarily to recapture former architectural glory, then the reasons for such failures need to be better understood. To do so, it is worth paying attention to the characteristics of post-conflict as a particular kind of socio-psychological space marked by limitations as well as opportunities.

Based on examples from European post-conflict scenarios over recent decades, the following characteristics have been identified:[7]

- A need to legitimate previous actions and to support the rights of certain groups to the exclusion of other groups,
- A search for variables to support claims on reparation, and to formulate new ownership claims,
- A tendency to present simplistic and partial versions of events, and to include selected historical accounts,
- A tendency to construct notions of victims, including presenting heritage itself as a victim
- Competition for international attention.

In addition to these core characteristics, several factors that tend to add to the complexity of post-conflict societies can be identified. These can be summarised through the themes of actors, the international/local binary, and expectation of outcomes,

Actors (consultants, stakeholders, local residents)

In practical terms, reconstruction after the end of a conflict is considered and executed by many different actors, from the people immediately affected rebuilding their own homes and communities remaking important communal focal points, to international bodies, such as UNESCO or the World Bank as well as a range of NGOs and volunteers.

As the ideological reasons for reconstruction have shifted, more and more emphasis is being placed on local involvement. This, however, is not straightforward. The composition of 'local' communities is not always pre-given, they may not have coherent or shared views about their needs or be able to give voice to them, or they may need time to comprehend their long-term versus short-term needs. In practical terms, local involvement commonly takes the form of consultancy, but such interactions are usually of short duration, producing a snapshot of local needs rather than more in-depth and co-produced insights. This is particularly challenging when reconstruction aims at reconciliation. So, while reconstruction of heritage should be part of the first phase of response after conflict, it does need to be allowed to take time, to be slow. Many failed reconstruction projects bear witness to this challenge. For instance, in the rural area of Kravica, eastern Bosnia Herzegovina, which saw heavy destruction of infrastructures and homes during the 1990s war, relatively quick internationally supported recovery projects invested in the repair of wide-ranging aspects of communities, such as the church and roads, but also in building new houses. However, when visiting the area in 2010[8] many of the older houses had seen a degree of repair, and there were visible traces of re-use of old material in some of the new houses, but many of the new houses stood empty and interviewees shared a wide sense of loss when reflecting on their notion of home. With the substantial burden of trauma and loss, the small but notable changes in the social landscape, such as the location of the new houses on agricultural land rather than along boundaries or the slight change in architecture with fewer local design elements, seem to have caused the new houses to become alien rather than welcomed part of the community.

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[7] These observations are based on overviews reached through the CRIC project.

International efforts versus local practices

Reconstruction often becomes a matter of concern and aspiration for wider communities, including international bodies. Moreover, for iconic heritage sites, reconstruction often entails a notion of prestige buildings with internationally renowned architects employed. This can work well, although it is always a precarious balance between bringing outside resources and being aware of the sensitivities affecting fractured local milieus. It can, therefore, also result in reconstructions that cause considerable local tensions while at the same time being internationally celebrated.

The case of the al-Nouri mosque, in Mosul, Iraq, is an interesting example of this tension. The divergent attitudes of UNESCO and local heritage specialists are revealing the deep gulf that still often exists between international and locally embedded views about reconstruction (Sørensen 2021). The al-Nouri mosque in Mosul, an important historic monument and active religious site, was destroyed during the Battle of Mosul in 2017; a destruction usually attributed to Daesh. It was quickly decided that the complex should be restored/reconstructed. The UAE Government donated funds for this purpose in 2018, and on the 15th of April 2021 UNESCO announced the outcome of the competition for the ‘Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of Al-Nouri complex in Mosul’. The site is thus imbued with layers of political and symbolic significance, and the proposal for its reconstruction seems to have furthered these.

UNESCO announced that the reconstruction aimed at ‘the rehabilitation of the historical fabric of the Old City of Mosul, the revival of the city’s cultural life, and the strengthening of its educational system to ensure quality education for all.’ And that ‘The reconstruction of Al-Nouri … will be a landmark in the process of advancing the war-torn city’s reconciliation and social cohesion.’ In this emphasis, UNESCO was advocating heritage sites as catalysts for ‘people’s sense of belonging, of community, and identity’ (references to full texts in Sørensen 2021), and explained that ‘While the prayer hall will look as it did before the 2017 destruction of Al-Nouri Mosque, it will feature notable improvements’ (ibid.). However, local experts received the winning design very differently. Professor Ihsan Fethi, an expert on the city and its historical remains, has critiqued the outcome extensively and pointed to what he considers as serious errors in terms of both appropriateness and suitability with regard to the particular context (ibid.). He critiqued the lack of engagement with local experts and craftspeople and lamented that the most important historical elements were not included.

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[8] Notes from fieldwork in Kravica, eastern Bosnia Herzegovina, conducted in 2010 with Tonko Rajkovača.

The case points to how despite the best intentions, top-down international heritage reconstruction projects can very easily result in impositions that lack genuineness in terms of cultural connection and context. Heritage reconstructions cannot just be ‘dumped’ on local communities; they need to become part of a place.

Understanding impacts and desired outcomes

Finally, reconstruction is always a deliberate act, and it comes with reasons, including expectations about the outcomes. The desired outcomes of reconstruction vary. There is, for instance, an approach that focuses on restorative justice, others, such as UNESCO, see the ultimate goals to be reconciliation and peace(building), there are others for whom the remaking of lost lifeways is paramount, others who approach reconstruction as an expression of resilience, and yet others for whom reconstruction is focussed on tourism. Clearly, these different motivations sometimes overlap but equally obvious the goals may be very different, and even contradictory.

One of the most complex motivations is related to responses to deliberate destruction, as this can cause reconstructions to become a reparative mechanism including legal punishment or even revenge. There is considerable interest in how reconstruction in such situations can be used for reconciliation or even healing. Many contemporary projects concerned with reconciliation have focussed on getting opposing communities to work together, ranging from rebuilding together, learning crafts, or making music. More sustained efforts in explaining what reconstruction may bring to the future of destroyed communities are needed before these emerging concerns become routine considerations in post-conflict decision-making.

Reflections – as a way of conclusion

Reconstruction has typically been considered an engineering and architectural problem/task and the insights of sociology or psychology were rarely part of decision-making. Moreover, for very understandable reasons, reconstruction was usually not part of the first range of responses, as people's situations were considered first in terms of basic physical needs such as shelter and health. It has, however, become clear that this easily risks reconstruction being dealt with away from the communities affected and presented as solutions to perceived needs, rather than based on more profound insights into what these needs may be and how they will express themselves.

Traditionally reconstruction was not explicitly conceptualised as a reconstruction of lifeways, qualities of being and a concern with elements that are constitutive of the notions of self and rootedness in place and tradition. Sometimes reconstructions did work well, other times less so; but their success or failure was not based on well-founded insights into the challenges embedded within reconstructions. The ontological and existential problems caused by the destruction of lifeways were generally underappreciated by the official bodies put in charge of reconstruction, and the inclusion of such concerns (and outcomes) appears random rather than recognised as a core challenge. This has changed, and reconstruction is now widely recognised as not only a matter of houses and roads but also about the remaking of lives that had gained depth and meaning through tradition and familiar habitats connected to a space.

The violent destruction of one's environment will usually induce a sense of existential insecurity, ontological angst, and distrust of the future. The person and community are undermined, their past erased, and their future is unsure. Before a reconstruction project begins, the complex nature of trauma (individual and communal) needs to be recognised and questions asked about how reconstruction – its form, scale, and timing – will affect how people can move on. We should also recognise that some of the routine activities introduced into post-conflict societies, such as memorials and memorialisation, often are backward-looking, and focused on loss. An expression of loss may be needed, but community recovery needs to also focus on a future that can remember and celebrate its past but is not held hostage by it.

By way of a conclusion, several points of concern can be listed as a step towards more engagement and deeper scrutiny of why the aspirations to rebuild better too often fail. Such failures and shortcomings are contextually specific, but there are also features which appear timeless and relevant to most societal recoveries. Using failures as measured against intentions, could be one way of advancing our comprehension of the nature of the post-conflict society and the chances of recovery. The list below provides an overview of some of the common difficulties.

- Poorly conceived decisions and projects are possibly worse than no reconstruction – reconstructions can be harmful and have detrimental medium-to-long-term effects,
- The intentions of external partners can be complicated and cause interference with local needs and aspirations,
- Wars with winners and losers, as well as identified victims and perpetrators, are different in their impact from those where there is neither. This impacts heritage, and reconstruction processes can be deeply influenced by this as the heritage may be used as a means of scoring points against the other,
- If heritage is contested it is extremely problematic to only embed it within local relations. It might be helpful to analyse how it may be connected to other discourses and attempts at conflict resolution,
- The wide recognition of the importance of the inclusion of local communities should be recognised as potentially difficult to achieve, and reasons for resistance should be analysed and acted on, to move this agenda forward,
- The complex nature of heritage should be recognised, in particular its potency as a symbol and means of legitimacy.

However, reconstruction efforts will also be confronted with more fundamental sociological, political, and even philosophical challenges. Time and timing are essential, but difficult to make decisions about. The process of recovery can start at different stages of the destroyed-recovered cycle, and it can aim at different temporalities – short, medium or long-term. It needs to take account of generational differences and the ways memory works. The issue of scale also raises important fundamental challenges and refers to both place and people. How comprehensive can a reconstruction project be, and on what basis and how are limits drawn? These fundamental aspects point to decision and decision-making processes, but the means of reaching decisions are often part of the fatalities of conflict – typically during post-conflict the social order that ensured meaningful processing of decisions is absent, broken, or its rightfulness disputed. Over recent decades, the field of heritage has widely rejected top-down approaches to the making of heritage and called for them to be replaced by bottom-up engagements. We are, however, beginning to learn that this bipartite view is itself too rigid and to some extent also represents a top-down paternalistic position of granting rights. Moreover, the laudable attention towards bottom-up engagement is particularly burdened in post-conflict scenarios as it expects disempowered people and fractured communities to easily take on and act on their rights to decide. It is important to exercise greater realism in terms of 'the ability to act' within post-conflict contexts and to accept that messy and clumsy processes and solutions may be best as they are not pre-set in a notion of hierarchy but may allow organic ways of cooperating and learning from each other to emerge and be relevant to the particularities of special communities.

This paper has suggested that if the reconstruction of societies after conflict ignores how heritage is a pillar of meaningful lives, then reconstructions risk creating shallow new places and miss out on the possibility of rebuilding lives. This argument is shared by many, and there are emerging examples of good practices to learn from in which culture – as an essential aspect of being and thus of mental health – is forefronted in relief efforts. At the same time, it should be stressed that heritage is not a band-aid – this underestimates the nature of trauma and simplifies what people need heritage for, how they engage with it, and what it can provide.

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Biography

Marie Louise Stig Sørensen, Professor Emerita, was employed at the University of Cambridge from 1987 to 2024. Her teaching and research have focussed on the Bronze Age in temperate Europe, Heritage Studies, and Gender. Her interest is the role of material culture – how objects affect us and are employed in the construction and experience of identity, and how this relationship is explored both during social upheavals and in the everyday. She has conducted fieldwork in Cape Verde, Denmark, and Hungary. She has a wide publication record with some 15 books, and more than 140 book chapters and articles, including *Memorials in the Aftermath of Armed Conflict. From History to Heritage* (with Viejo-Rose and Filippucci, 2019) and *War and Cultural Heritage. Biographies of Place* (with Viejo-Rose, 2015). She was the PI on the FP7 project CRIC (Cultural Heritage and the Re-construction of Identities after Conflict) from 2008–2012.

TOWARDS AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF DEVASTATION: BREAKING / REPLACING THE PEOPLE-PLACE CONNECTION IN LANDSCAPE

What happens when landscapes are not simply altered, but deliberately obliterated? How do communities reimagine identity when the places anchoring their memory and meaning are violently erased?

This groundbreaking volume explores the entangled fates of people and place in times of destruction, dislocation, and re-settlement. Moving beyond conventional heritage or environmental narratives, the book adopts a landscape-based approach to examine the social, cultural, and psychological impacts of sudden, often state-sanctioned devastation - whether by war, genocide, forced migration, or cultural erasure.

Spanning deep historical time to recent memory, and encompassing diverse geographies, the case studies in this book chart the processes through which landscapes are both weaponised and reclaimed. From the deliberate annihilation of material culture to the reconfiguration of space in the aftermath of catastrophe, the contributors interrogate how identity is severed, reshaped, or preserved through landscape.

Rooted in archaeology, history, and landscape theory - and resonating with current global crises - this volume offers a compelling new lens for understanding the aftermaths of destruction and the possibilities of recovery, resistance, and renewal.

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